ALCANDER AND PHILOCRATES: OR, THE *Pleasures* and *Disquietudes* OF MARRIAGE.

NOVEL.

Written by a Young Lady.

LONDON, Printed for *R. Parker*, at the *Royal Exchange*, S. *Briscoe* at *Covent-Garden*, and *S. Burrowes* in *Cornhill*, 1696.

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To the Right Honourable, the Earl of ARRAN, Knight of the most Ancient, and most Noble Order of the THISTLE, &c.

'Twas with much ado, my Lord, that I resolv'd to prefix so great a Name to such a Trifle; but I consider'd, that as the truly generous chuse always the unfortunate and poor, for Subjects of their Generosity, so it may be the Glory of illustrious Persons to immortalize those Works by their Patronage, which cou'd not by their own Worth support themselves: And I was the more willing to throw this little Book at your Lordship's Feet, that the shame of having made your Lordship so mean a Present may incite me to some more noble Undertaking, by way of atonement; and the Ambition of producing something of my own, less unworthy of your Lordship's Protection, may inspire me beyond my natural Genius. In the mean time, my Lord, may I hope you will be pleas'd to look favourably on my first Attempt in this kind, and not be too severe on a Woman's Faults; next the two Heroes (if I may call them so) of this Novel, beg your Lordship's decision of their grand Dispute, whether it is best to live single, or to marry; which tho' the only Subject of this Piece, is left unresolv'd: And indeed, in my Opinion, they had before chosen a very improper, because an unexperienc'd Judge of their Contest; but your Lordship, who has try'd both Estates, will be best able to give a just Sen-

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tence;

of the Countess of Arran, will not doubt for which side you will determine; a Lady, so perfectly accomplish'd——but I dare not attempt to praise her, whose Name ought to be celebrated by all the noblest Pens, if her own Vertues did not give her a more certain Immortality.

And now, my Lord, our Expectations are on your Lordship, all wishing with Impatience that you wou'd make a second choice, one worthy to succeed that excellent and pious Princess, the present Dutchess of Hamilton, *from whom we might hope for a young Inheritor of the Glory and Dignity of his great Ancestors, and of those Noble Vertues which give your Lordship a more venerable Greatness than that which you derive from your illustrious Birth. Were I capable, my Lord, of doing Justice to your Merit, with what delight cou'd I dwell upon this glorious Theam, whilst I need not fear the Imputation of Flattery from any, since all Parties amidst their hotteſt Dissentions, agree in their value of your Lordship, those eminent Vertues, which their Interest wou'd make them Enemies to, forcing their Admiration.*

This Contemplation draws me to a consideration of my Presumption in this Address, and makes me hasten to retire from so great a Presence, which I ought to stand more in awe of, than all the vain Censures of the Town, which I have shelter'd myself from with so much Care, being known by no Name but that which will be my Protection, the Title of,

My Lord,
Your Lordship's most Oblig'd,
Most Humble Servant.

ALCAN-

ALCANDER AND PHILOCRATES: OR, THE *Pleasures* and *Disquietudes* OF MARRIAGE.

Alcander had no sooner heard that his Friend *Philocrates* was upon the point of Marriage, than he run to his Lodging, where he found him alone, with the Abbot *Sophin*. Your Friends (said he to him) will, without doubt, come to Rejoyce with you, for what you are going about; and I am come to tell you, that it distracts me. Unhap-

py Wretch! into what Abyſs of Pains and Diſquiets are you going to throw your ſelf? Marry! (continued he) what Sin have you committed to be puniſh'd with ſo many Miſeries as are going to overwhelm you, to engage your ſelf all your Life to one Perſon, without being able to change? Let her become Sullen, Ugly, Old, or Unfaithful, you muſt Die Chain'd to her, or elſe proceed to ſcandalous Extremities. But you who talk at this rate, (anſwer'd *Philocrates*, with an Air cold and penſive) have not you been Marry'd, and ſenſibly afflicted at the Death of your Wife? 'Tis very true, (reply'd *Alcander*) and yet I never ſuffer'd ſo much as in the two years I paſs'd with her. How is that poſſible (ſaid *Philocrates*) you lov'd her, and ſhe you? She was young and handſom, had Wit, Quality, and Fortune, what then could hinder you from being Happy? I don't know what to ſay to you, (return'd *Alcander*) but I am perſwaded, that let a Woman be never ſo Amiable, or what ever tenderneſs one may have for her, when one is become her Husband, the Heart paſſes very ſoon from Love to Indifference, and from Indifference to a Diſguſt. How comes that (reply'd *Philocrates*)? I have a great deal of difficulty (interrupted *Alcander*) to per-

trate into the true reason of it; it may be, that in seeing a Woman very often, and more nearly, we find no more in her that Merit, and those Charms, by which we were attracted. It may be, the Heart does not agree with such a calm possession; or, it may be, in fine, that the frequent commerce of the Senses, extinguishes their vivacity. You drive things much too far, (interrupted *Philocrates*) a Man of Prudence, and Judgment, will not Marry a Woman without knowing her to have Virtue, and Merit; so that the more he sees her, the more he discovers her good Qualities, and is the more satisfy'd with his Choice. He makes a duty, and a soft habitude of loving her; she gives him a thousand innocent Pleasures, she keeps him from Debauchery, with voluptuous Lawful Joys; she brings him fine Children, which she educates with tender Care; she follows him in his Adversity, as well as in his highest Fortune. In fine, she is a faithful Companion, who never abandons him till Death. How shall one know a Woman before one Marries her? (interrupted *Alcander* in a rallying tone.) Women are incomprehensible; the cunningest, and most penetrating, are deceiv'd in 'em; they never speak or act sincerely; there's nothing but Disguise and Artifice in

all they do; they change without reason; have no solidity in their Wit, or in their Heart; their Beauty is not proof against a little Fever, nor their Virtue against the smallest Interest, or Pleasure. When they marry, they have only, for the most part, a certain blind, and irregular Love for their Husbands, which ceases in a little time, by changing its Object; an insupportable Vanity, and Ambition, or a low, a sordid Interest, is what takes up all their Thoughts. In the mean while, you wou'd have a Husband frame in himself, a soft habitude of loving a Woman with these faults, because he has Marry'd her; believe me, the Heart is too great a Libertine, to subject it self to such sort of Laws; to pretend that a Woman can retain her Husband by the Pleasures of the Senses, what probability? For him, she has only dull, and insipid Pleasures; if the Husband has a Penchant to Incontinence, she serves, at most, to nourish Fires, which he generally extinguishes in other places. 'Tis a fine satisfaction to have a Woman eternally by one's side, for whom one feels nothing but a disgust, or, at least an indifference; a covetous or an imperious Woman, who Criticizes even upon your least actions; or, a Fool, who fatigues you with her false Reasonings;

a Coquet, an ambitious Woman, or a Gamester, who torments you with her extravagant Expences; don't deceive your self, there are few Women who have not that defect. For Children, what pains, what trouble, is not one at in bringing them up? To how many Infirmities and Sicknesses are they subject? And when they are grown up, what disquietudes to settle them in the World? Sometimes they happen to be False, Debauchees, Unnatural, Prodigal, Imprudent, Gamesters; in fine, they are Inhumane Creditors, who take away your Fortune, and put you out of a condition to bestow it on your Pleasures. Why then (reply'd *Philocrates*) does all the World Marry, if that State is so uneasie? Some (answer'd *Alcander*) out of a motive of Religion, others of Interest, some for Policy, and others because the rest of the World Marry, without examining any further. You deceive your self (reply'd *Philocrates*) the effects of Marriage are not so uneasie as you say, nor all Women so terrible as you would have us believe, the Person with whom I engage my self, is of a humour very opposite to those Women you have describ'd. Yes, *Fraudelisa* is nothing but Sincerity and Virtue, a thousand Charms shine in her Soul, a thousand Beauties in her Per-

ſon, which are not to be ſeen in any other. *Philabell* lov'd her to madneſs, and tho' he is a Man of Quality, very handſom, with a great deal of Wit, Gallant, and naturally belov'd by Women, yet ſhe cou'd not endure him, and refus'd to let him continue his Viſits to her, becauſe of the Liberties he took, and his Diſcourſes with double meanings: The poor Child told me, that in one Afternoon he made her bluſh twenty times. She is not like the Women of the Age, ſhe loves retirement, and ſolitude; her Clothes, and all her Behaviour, is extreamly modeſt; ſhe never lays out any thing extraordinary, but, with regret, hardly knows the Cards; and is ſo far from all Coquettry, that t'other day, I could not perſwade her that any Women could be unfaithful to their Husbands. I may ſay, ſhe loves me tenderly, and yet, whenever her inclination moves her to give me ſome marks of it, her reſervedneſs, and modeſty, retains her. Ah! how happy are we going to be (continued he) by our Marriage? Abſolute Maſters of one another's Hearts, and Perſons. We may, without ſcruple, and without Partners, ſatisfie, every day, our tender, Amorous Tranſports. Tender and Amorous Tranſports (reply'd *Alcander*) are not Meſſes for married People. And

And for whom then, (interrupted *Philocrates*, raising his voice) for your *Lesbia*? for you? Believe me, (continued he) unless we esteem a Woman for her Virtue, and her Fidelity, she can give us none of the real joys of Love; those are but Debaucheries, in which the Senses alone find any Pleasures, without the Souls partaking of 'em, which is the reason that they are generally follow'd with nothing but regret, despisings, and disgusts. How can one esteem a Woman (continued he) and rely upon her Fidelity, at the very time when she betrays her Duty, her Honour, and her Religion, to abandon her self to her Passion? Ah! (reply'd *Alexander*) if you knew *Lesbia* as well as I do, how differently wou'd you talk? Oh, there is not a Maid in *France* less Interested, or more Generous; she keeps two thousand *Lewis d'Ores* for me, with the last Fidelity; what Wives can be so trusted? *Lesbia* love Libertinism! Ah, how far is she from it? She hates all Men; she loves nothing but me; and if she relishes any Pleasure, 'tis but with reference to me. And as far as I am sensible of it, I have heard her say a thousand times, That she wou'd place her greatest felicity in seeing her self with me alone, in some remote corner of the World. I gave her the fine Ruby you

have seen me wear; she wou'd not have taken it, and I had the greatest difficulty imaginable to oblige her to it. It drop'd out of the Ring and was lost; what tears she shed! She wou'd have giv'n all she had in the World to have found it, not that she regretted it for the value, but because she fansy'd it an Omen of my ceasing to love her. This Ruby, said she to me, which seem'd so fix'd, thus fall'n from the Ring, can be no other than a sign, and a presage, that I shall lose your love; but, be assur'd, I never shall survive it. Can you, in Marriage, find these Niceties, and such a tender Passion? Marry'd People are certain that they can never leave one another, and that assurance is the Poyson of tenderness; Love cannot live without desires, without some fears, and some difficulties. Softly, softly, (interrupted the Abbot *Sophin*) no comparisons with Marriage, bear it respect. I don't speak (reply'd *Alcander*, with a serious Air) of those sort of Marry'd People who are entirely loosned from their Senses, and only animated with a Spirit of Sanctity, and Purity, but of those who engage in Marriage only to satisfy their Sensuality; and who, not changing their Manners in so holy a State as that of Marriage, are guilty of abominable Adulteries, and so make themselves

themſelves a thouſand times more criminal. *Philocrates* (interrupting *Alcander*) ask'd the Abbot which ſide he wou'd take; adding, That he had known ſeveral Abbots who wou'd have been very well pleas'd to have had it in their power to Marry. *Alcander* maintain'd on his ſide, That there were many Marry'd People who wou'd gladly change their Wives for Benifices. The Abbot repreſented to them, That none are ever contented with their own condition, that therefore they ought not to decide their diſpute by that; but that, to judge of it ſolidly, they ſhou'd examine, with application, the Pleaſures and Diſquietudes of Marriage; that *Paris* was a great Theatre; that they need only hear the general Diſcourſe; and, with the leaſt Addreſs, to turn their Converſation upon that Subject, it wou'd be eaſie to Inſtruct themſelves very much in it in a little time. This Propoſition ſeem'd very reaſonable, both to *Philocrates* and *Alcander*; they intreated the Abbot not to leave them, telling him, They choſe him for Judge; which he accepted. *Alcander* told them, that he muſt go firſt to a Bankers, about a buſineſs of conſequence, whoſe Wife was of a ſingular, and pleaſant humour, and that if they wou'd go with him, he cou'd promiſe them ſome di-

verſion.

version. They agreed to it, and together they went; the Banker had just D.n'd, and was in his Wives Chamber with her; but *Alcander* had no sooner begun to talk with him, than one came to ask for him; he went out of the Chamber, and left the Company with his Wife. *Philocrates* finding her young and sprightly, ask'd her what Book she had in her Hand; 'tis the Princess of *Cleves* (said she.) What think you of it, Madam, (answer'd *Alcander?*) I think her very foolish, (reply'd she) what Impertinence, for a Woman to tell her Husband that she loves another Man? Where had the Author left his Judgment when he writ that Part, for he manages the rest of his Subject well enough? For my part, (reply'd *Philocrates*) I can't condemn that, since Madam *de Cleves* had a violent inclination for the Duke of *Nemours*, which nothing but Absence cou'd Cure, and that she had no other way to remove her self from him. Seriously (continued he) if I had a Wife in Madam *de Cleves* condition, who shou'd make me such a confidence, 'twou'd give me a great esteem for her. Ah, Sir, (reply'd the Lady smiling) what a Treasure are you for a Wife! let but those Sentiments be known in *Paris*, and you may choose where you will. But, Madam, (interrupted the Abbot)

Abbot) what wou'd you have had the Princeſs of *Cleves* do? Since ſhe cou'd not (reply'd the Lady) forbear loving Monſieur *de Nemours*, ſhe had nothing to do but take a method for the ſatisfaction of all three, which was to diſcover her Affection to him, to take ſecret Meaſures with him, that the Intrigue might make no noiſe, and to Careſs the Prince of *Cleves* more than ſhe had done before, that he might not ſuſpect her. How many cruel torments had ſhe ſav'd her ſelf this way? What raviſhing Pleaſures had ſhe given her Lover and her ſelf? And, to conclude, ſhe had not occaſion'd Monſieur *de Cleves*'s Death, like a Fool. *Philocrates*, and *Alcander*, thought her reaſoning ſo pleaſant, that they fell a laughing, and highly commending what ſhe had ſaid, which ſo extreamly pleas'd her, that ſhe went on, ſaying, You muſt own, Gentlemen, that many Authors ſtray very far from Probability, and good Sence; witneſs the Author of the Diſorders of the *Baſſett*. The Marquis *de Roziers* loves Madam *de Landroza* paſſionately; ſhe has not the Character of a very ſcrupulous Woman, ſhe is ruin'd by play; he gives her twelve hundred *Louis d'Ores*, ſhe keeps the Money, and refuſes him the Merchandize: Was ever any thing ſo ridiculous and impertinent as this

Story?

Story? The Author has certainly very little knowledge of the World, to be ignorant of what a Woman in neceſſity is capable of doing for twelve hundred *Louis d'Ores*. As ſhe was talking thus, her Husband return'd from the Perſon whom he had gone out to ſpeak with, and having heard what ſhe had ſaid, he gave her a ſevere reprehenſion for it, telling her, She ought not to ſpend her time in reading thoſe ſort of Books, but mind her Huswifery and her Houſe; which nettled her to that degree, that ſhe ſaid all ſhe cou'd imagine of moſt injurious to him. She complain'd, that he was of a humour Chagrin and Bizarre, that he lov'd Gaming, Drinking, and all Licentiouſneſs, that ſhe had never had a Chamber-maid, Old or Young, Handſom or Ugly, but he had endeavour'd to corrupt them; and, in fine, to hear her ſpeak, one wou'd have thought him the worſt of Men, and her the wretcheſt of Women. The Husband, on the other hand, reproach'd her with the expence ſhe put him to, in Jewels, and other Ornaments, the little Fortune ſhe had brought him, the difficulty of being paid it, her Gallantries, her making Balls, her Maſquerading, the Muſick, and Collations, ſhe gave her ſelf at his Charge, the number of People, of all ſorts, which

ſhe

she receiv'd at her House to play; made her a hundred other reproaches, and said so many severe things to her, that they had like to have come to blows; but a Footman, whom she knew, coming into the Chamber, made her forbear proceeding in her resentments, to go speak to him in private; he gave her a Letter, and went presently away, and for all the care she took to conceal it, *Philocrates* and *Alcander* perceiv'd it. Immediately she went into another Chamber, with an Air full of Chagrin and Anger, and a moment after out of the House. *Alcander*, after having talk'd with the Banker of the business he came for, went away too, with *Philocrates* and the Abbot, and going down, *Alcander* found upon the Stairs a Letter, in these words:

LETTER.

YOU promis'd me yesterday, my Charmer, that you won'd not at all suffer the Caresses of your Jealous Tormenter last Night; I dare believe, how pressing soever he may have been, it being the beginning of the Spring, that you have kept your Word with me. How much am I oblig'd to you for it, my Dear! How sensible am I of it! And how impatient

to give you my Acknowledgments at the Place you know of!

As ſoon as they had read the Billet, they imagin'd it to be the ſame which they had ſeen the Footman give the Banker's Wife; that it came from her Gallant; that the Tormenter was her Husband; and that the precipitation wherewith ſhe had gone to the Rendezvous, had made her ſlip the Billet on one ſide, inſtead of putting it in her Pocket; or that ſhe had drop'd it in taking out her Handkerchief. *Alcander* thinking this example might be of uſe to his deſign, very coolly repreſented the unhappineſs of this Man; his Wife (ſaid he) conſumes the fruit of his Labours in wild Expences, ſhe deſpiſes him, ſhe makes an Academy of his Houſe, ſhe diſhonours him, deceives him, and refuſes him what a Wife owes her Husband, to make a ſacrifice of it to her Gallant! After this, be ſure you Marry. Sincerely, had it not been a great happineſs for this Banker to have had a Friend like me, that wou'd have repreſented to him what Marriage was, and have kept him from it? Really (ſaid *Philocrates* laughing) 'tis very pleaſant in you, to draw a conſequence from the conduct of Perſons like theſe, in whom we ſee neither Prudence, nor good

Manners

Manners; what brutalities has not this Man been guilty of before us? He knew his Wife to be of a violent Nature, why then did he provoke her? Ought he not to have ſtaid till he was alone with her, and ſhe in a calmer temper, and then have told her what he had to ſay to her? Expoſe his lewdneſs in his own Houſe! rare Example of Virtue for a young Wife! Faith (continued he) if ſhe is unfaithful to him, he contributes very much to it: Believe me, a Man of Honour, who loves his Wife, who is aſſiduous, and careful of her, makes himſelf belov'd by her, makes her at once be happy, kind, and faithful. What then, (reply'd *Alcander*) you imagine there needs no more to make a Wife be happy, and faithful, than to love her, to have ſome complaiſance, and aſſiduities for her; but you deceive your ſelf, (continued he) thoſe marks of tenderneſs, thoſe aſſiduities, only make a Wife the more Imperious, and often gives her a diſguſt, and ſcorn of her Husband; witneſs the Marchioneſs of *Seligny*, who is now Suing for a Divorce from her Husband. I have heard her ſay, ſhe ſhou'd never have had ſuch a thought if he had lov'd her leſs, and had been leſs aſſiduous about her. A very pleaſant cauſe of Separation (reply'd *Philocrates.*) She is young,

young, very handſom, and finely ſhap'd, (ſaid *Alcander* interrupting him;) ſome Gown men, of the firſt Quality, are her Lovers, by whoſe Intereſt ſhe obtains what ſhe pleaſes; and, in fine, ſhe has manag'd ſo adroitly, that 'tis above two years ſince ſhe liv'd with her Husband, and that ſhe has been diverting her ſelf in *Paris*. If you will (continued he) I'll carry you to ſee her. *Philocrates* and the Abbot, found the Ladies Character too ſingular, not to have that curioſity. She receiv'd them with a great deal of civility; there was with her, when they came, one of the long Robe call'd *Berly*, and the Chevalier ——— As ſhe has always an extraordinary deſire to talk of her Affair, *Alcander* had not much difficulty to bring her to it.

Of all the Women (ſays ſhe) that ever deſir'd to be parted from their Husbands, none ever had more cauſe than I, nor ſo much patience: Ah, miſerable Creature that I am, (purſu'd ſhe) to what ſtrange Deſtiny am I Born! Other Women complain of their Husbands, and wou'd be ſeparated from them, becauſe they are ſo far from loving them, and being often with them, that they continually ſhun and fly from them; but my cruel Stars have fix'd my misfortune in the troubleſom Aſſiduities, and the exceſſive Love, my

Husband

Husband had for me. As soon as he saw me at *Rheims*, he became desperately in love; his Person, his Estate, and Quality, charm'd my Mother, and me by consequence, so that the Marriage was soon concluded. Presently after he took me from that engaging City, and carry'd me to a place in the Country, which belong'd to him, to give himself (said he) entirely to me. What I suffer'd in that curs'd place! He did not live with me freely, and without ceremony, as Husbands do with their Wives, there was nothing but ridiculous Precautions, and impertinent Cares, for what concern'd me; I must not think of rising before Noon, my health wou'd be in danger. I had not the liberty to lie upon my Left Side, for (said he) the Liver is in danger; and, upon your Back, the Milt. What Visions are these to torment a Wife with? I love Fruit extreamly, but yet I was not suffer'd to eat any, my stomach was too weak. Walking I must never think of; in the Day time the Sun spoils the Complexion; the Evening, and Night, makes one take Cold, and brings Fluxions; so that I was condemn'd to stay all Day in my Chamber, working upon Tapestry. Nay, for the most part, he wou'd murmur against my Work too. For him, he wou'd pass

the

the whole Day with his Eyes fix'd upon me, ſometimes complaining, and ſometimes ſighing. How charming are your Eyes, Madam, (cry'd he?) Ah, that lovely Mouth! Then, with a furious Tranſport, he brought his great Lips upon my Eyes, and kiſs'd them ſo hard, that I was afraid he wou'd blind me. After theſe firſt Extaſies, he threw himſelf at my Feet; forgive me Madam, oh forgive (cry'd he) an inſolent, audacious Man, who ought to confine his Paſſion within the bounds of reſpect and adoration! He preſs'd my Knees till he made me cry out, and then falling into a profound Melancholy, he gaz'd upon me with fiery languiſhing Eyes, and fetching deep ſighs, how much am I to be lamented (ſaid he) my cruel Fair one? You do not love me, my company fatigues you, and you never ſee me without being uneaſie; alas, in Marrying you, I thought my ſelf the moſt fortunate of Men, but now I find I am only the more unhappy. 'Tis true, I am Maſter of your Perſon, but your Heart won't render it ſelf: Ah, ungrateful Charmer, take back your Perſon, or give me that cruel Heart! He did not end with theſe firſt Tranſports: Well, Inhumane Creature, (added he) ſince thou ſee'ſt the violent Paſſion I have for thee, with indifa

ference

ference, and ſcorn, here, (ſaid he to me drawing his Sword, and giving it to me) pierce, with a thouſand Wounds, this Heart which thou doſt ſo much torment, and end a Life which thou mak'ſt ſo inſupportable to me. This, Gentlemen, was his Behaviour when ever we were together; won't you own then, that never any Woman endur'd ſo much as I? or had more reaſon to covet a Separation? Did he torment you, Madam, (ſaid *Alcander*) as much in the Night as in the Day? You have a mind to laugh, Sir, (anſwer'd ſhe) but methinks I have made you underſtand enough. This Saying was taken in a pleaſant ſence, that made all the Company laugh; then the Abbot taking up the Diſcourſe, ſaid to her, Give me leave, Madam, to tell you, that he well deſerv'd to be pardon'd all his Tranſports, ſince they proceeded from his extraordinary love for you, and his regrets for not being belov'd by you. If he wou'd have made himſelf be lov'd, (reply'd the Lady) he ſhou'd have obſerv'd what wou'd pleaſe me moſt, done all he cou'd to appear amiable in my Eyes, and not have tir'd me with being eternally in my company, and his inſupportable way of behaviour. I love company, he ought not then to have taken me from *Rheims*, but to have ſtay'd, and

entertain'd in his Houſe all the *Beaux monde* there, to divert me. I can paſs away ſome hours agreeably enough at Cards, ſo that he ſhou'd never have let me want Money, nor Company for play: Being well dreſs'd affects me, ſhou'd not he then have furniſh'd me every Month with all that was fineſt, and moſt faſhionable? In fine, I love Diverſions, his chief buſineſs ſhou'd have been to procure 'em for me; and that was the courſe he ſhou'd have taken to arrive at my Heart. Pray, Madam, (ſaid *Alcander*) how cou'd you contrive to free your ſelf from this Tyrant? The moſt pleaſantly in the World (anſwer'd ſhe): Near the Caſtle where I lived there was a little Wood, in which was found abundance of *Cantharides*, I got ſome of them, had them dry'd, and apply'd them to my Neck; in a little time they made a great Excoriation, as I deſign'd: I feign'd my ſelf Sick, and acted ſo well, that ſometimes the Marquis found me ſighing, ſometimes looking up to Heaven as in deſpair; and, at other times, in Tears, or a Praying. I ſpoke to him of nothing but what was diſmal; of Death, of Paradiſe, of Hell. In fine, I plaid my part ſo well, that I gave him a great curioſity to know from whence this change proceeded; I foreſaw well enough, that

he wou'd attribute it to ſome violent Paſſion I had conceiv'd for another; and that he had too great a diſpoſition for Jealouſie to be free from it upon ſuch an occaſion: And I was not miſtaken, he left no Artifice unattempted to diſcover the truth. And one day, when he was condemning my Conduct, with a great deal of ſharpneſs, and complaining that I lov'd another, I threw my ſelf at his Feet, and told him, That if my Life only was concern'd, I wou'd not make him a diſcovery, which, perhaps, wou'd give him a loathing for my Perſon; but my Honour being in danger, by the injurious ſuſpicions he had of me, I was conſtrain'd to tell him, That my Grandmother had dy'd of a Cancer which had been neglected, that all our Family was ſubject to that Diſtemper, and that I had a long time felt ſome Symptoms of it, which was the cauſe of my appearing ſo cold, and ſo out of humour. In fine, that it had broke out, and was ſo extreamly painful to me, that I believ'd I had nothing to do but to prepare my ſelf for Death. He wou'd needs ſee the Sore, which, after a little refuſal, I ſuffer'd: The *Cantharides* had had ſuch an effect, that he was deceiv'd; he had never ſeen a Cancer, ſo that it was no difficult matter. Then I threw my ſelf about his Neck, with tears in my Eyes I

embrac'd him, gave him those sort of moving Adieus, which are usual with dying Persons, and conjur'd him never to Marry another after my Death. I spoke to him of a Will, and of a Feoffment in trust for him. Good God! how naturally I feign'd when I think of it; if he was troubled at my pretended Distemper, he was as much rejoyc'd to find himself, as he imagin'd, so well belov'd. Immediately he sent for the Chirurgeon of his Village, who had heard of Cancers, but had never seen any no more than he; so that you may believe, it was easie for me to perswade him that I had one. Monsieur *de Seligny* charg'd him to take care of me, threatning, That his Life should answer for mine; which seeing, he was extreamly frighted at. I profited of that conjuncture, and, with a little Money, perswaded him to tell the Marquis, that there was never a Man in *Provence*, that knew how to Cure those sort of Diseases; and that only one Physician in *Paris* had that secret. I seem'd averse to the Journey, or, rather, I conceal'd the eager desire I had to make it, telling him, I had rather stay where I was, and dye in his Arms. But I knew his kindness too great to take me at my word; he rais'd a considerable Sum of Money, and conducted me hither, where I took Ad-

vice

vice, ſeiz'd upon the Money, and left him taking my Woman, and a Footman with me. For the Form, my Counſel told me I muſt give in a Complaint, wherein I ſhou'd declare, That he had often drawn his Sword againſt me: Which I did. I forgot to tell you, that at the time when he play'd thoſe Fooleries I ſpoke of to you, when he drew his Sword in my Chamber, I cry'd out, pretending to be frighted, which occaſion'd my Woman, and Footman, to run in, and find him in that poſture; ſo that I made them both Depoſe, that they had ſeen him with his naked Sword againſt me. There needs no more in Juſtice to condemn him; and my Counſellor aſſures me, that I ſhall infallibly gain my Cauſe. How much were you to be lamented, Madam, (reply'd *Alcander*?) but you muſt own, that Monſieur *de Seligny* is no leſs unfortunate, and that it wou'd have been more for the repoſe of both, that you had never married. Don't you perceive (ſaid *Philocrates* addreſſing himſelf to *Alcander*) that the misfortune proceeds only from the Marchioneſs's never having had any inclination for the Marquis? and that if ſhe had lov'd him, their marriage had been accompany'd with tenderneſs and pleaſure? It is not Love, (interrupted *Alcander*) that makes a Hus-

band happy; how many are there who ſuffer by the exceſs of love their Wives have for them? That's a thing extraordinary enough, (reply'd *Philocrates*) and which it will be hard for you to prove. I my ſelf (reply'd *Berly*) know many examples of it, and I am perſwaded that the Husband of a Coquet, who cares not at all for him, is leſs to be pity'd than one whoſe Wife dotes upon him extravagantly. How can that be (interrupted *Philocrates*)? A Coquet Wife (anſwer'd *Berly*) never contradicts her Husband, but is always of the ſame opinion with him, always gay, always endeavouring to divert him, and has every moment ſomething new and pleaſant to tell him. When he brings any of his Friends home, ſhe receives them in the moſt obliging manner, ſhe entertains them, and diverts her ſelf with them; if he careſſes her ſhe returns it; if he ſeems cold, ſhe neither frets, nor complains of it; ſhe has none of thoſe delicacies of heart which ſerve only to make both unhappy, never any Jealouſie, no uneaſie humours; if ſhe has a Chamber-maid that her Husband likes, ſhe won't turn her away for that: Let her defend her ſelf, if ſhe will, ſays ſhe, let him attack well if he can, 'tis not my buſineſs; whereas a Woman that loves her Husband extreamly, tires him Night

and Day, one while with her proteſtations of love and tenderneſs made out of ſeaſon, by and by with ſuſpicions and reproaches, and even ſometimes with railings. *Valoury* has often told me, that there is nothing ſo inſupportable as theſe ſort of Diſcourſes from a Wife, for whom the Heart is no longer ſenſible, and that he had but too much experienc'd it with his; ſhe is always a crying, ſaid he, and can hardly be made to take any nouriſhment; if I fail of coming home to Dinner, or to Bed, ſhe won't eat, and will ſit up all Night to wait for me; ſhe was once very handſome, but with this fine way of living ſhe is become very frightful. After this (ſaid *Valoury* to me) muſt not you allow that I am the unhappieſt Man alive in a Wife, and that the Husband of a Coquet is much leſs to be pity'd? I have heard (reply'd the Chevalier) of *Valoury*'s conduct with his Wife, 'tis ſo highly ingrateful that he is not excuſable in it; ſhe was a Maid when he fell in love with her, his Paſſion made an impreſſion upon her, and ſhe receiv'd his Addreſſes, but being an only Child, and her Birth and Fortune above his, her Father was againſt it; ſhe lov'd him to that degree, that ſhe pretended to be with Child by him; there is nothing to be imagin'd beyond the rigorous treatment

her Father gave her, yet she remain'd firm and constant. In fine, the Father thinking there was no remedy, to repair the honour of the Family, consented to their Marriage. This base Man had not liv'd a Fortnight with her, (amiable as she was, and tho' she had the last tenderness for him) before he took a disgust for her, and apply'd himself to another, much less deserving than she. My God! how sottish you are, Madam *de Valoury*, (interrupted briskly Madam *de Seligny?*) Ah! if your Husband had had to do with me, how well wou'd I have reduc'd him! What wou'd you have done (reply'd *Alcander?*) When a Man (replyed she) believes himself entirely possess'd of his Wife, and that he has nothing to fear, nor to wish beyond, he quickly falls into an indifference for her; 'tis that which made *Valoury* cease to love his, seeing that he alone possess'd her without a sharer. For my part, I wou'd have acted more prudently than she did; as soon as I had perceiv'd my Husband's first fondness for me abated, I wou'd have made my self some Lovers, whom I wou'd have brought to the House that he might see them; Jealousie wou'd immediately have awakened his sleeping Passion, and restor'd him to me. What pleasure shou'd I have had in affecting a

little

little cruelty, and rebuking him at first? I shou'd have made my self a second good Fortune for him; and thence it is (continued she) that Women who are adroit, and gallant, are more belov'd by their Husbands than others, because, not finding themselves in that tranquil possession which leads to indifference, they wish, they fear, they hope, despair, and consolate themselves. And 'tis in these different agitations that Love nourishes it self; whereas the Husbands of Wives, of Madam *de Valoury*'s humour, and character, hardly return to their affection, because they don't feel that diversity of movements, their possession being calm, peaceable, and without trouble. Women (reply'd the Chevalier) never want address in the management of their amours; and after, what Madam *de Valoury* has done, one may say, with reason, that nothing is impossible for them, to have had the secret of becoming a second good Fortune to her Husband, to have made him meet her often, two or three hours after Midnight, upon assignations, to have rais'd in him the highest transports which a most passionate Lover is capable of: And, in fine, by that means, to have brought him one of the finest Children in the World. Tell me, is not that an argument of it? That's extreamly plea-

ſant, (anſwer'd the Marchioneſs) but pray, Sir, oblige me in explaining your ſelf. Madam *de Valoury* (reply'd the Chevalier) lov'd her Husband infinitely, whilſt he had nothing but an averſion for her, ſo far that he cou'd not endure her company, but wou'd have a ſeparate Bed, which was a moſt ſenſible affliction to ſo tender, ſo fond a Wife. As ſhe was one day endeavouring to gueſs at what cou'd be the cauſe of his behaviour, it came into her thoughts that it muſt needs be the love of ſome other, and, in a little time, ſhe diſcover'd that he was much taken up with a young Widow who was her Neighbour; ſhe made an acquaintance with her, and manag'd her with ſo much Wit and Addreſs, that in a little time ſhe became her moſt intimate Friend. This Widow was at Law with her Husband's Relations for her own Jointure, and her Childrens Fortune; ſhe was none of the richeſt, and the extraordinary expence of her Law-Suit ſtreightned her very much. Madam *de Valoury* made uſe of this occaſion, ſhe ſolicited the Judges for her, lent her Money; and, in fine, did her ſo many other ſervices, that ſhe engag'd her entirely to her Intereſts; which was ſo much the eaſier for her to do, the Widow's heart being prepoſſeſs'd in favour of another.

ther. That oblig'd her to make Madam *de Valoury* a confidence of the paſſion her Husband had for her, what diſcourſe he had had with her, the Preſents he wou'd have made her; and, in fine, with how much ſpirit and vigour he continually preſs'd her. Madam *de Valoury* deſir'd her not to refuſe his Money, nor his Preſents, proffering to deliver the Merchandiſe for her; and thus, by confederacy, they manag'd the Affair. The Widow receiv'd his Preſents, and pretended to yield; but that which ſeem'd the moſt difficult, as ſhe ſaid to *Valoury*, was to contrive a place for the rendezvous, becauſe ſhe was much obſerv'd by thoſe about her; that her Woman never left her all the day, whom ſhe durſt not truſt; that ſhe had a little Daughter extreamly ſharp, who obſerv'd all things very narrowly, and talk'd very much, and that between the two, ſhe had a great deal of circumſpection to keep, unleſs ſhe wou'd ruine her ſelf. *Valoury* ſeeing what difficulties there wou'd be in the day time, offer'd to come in the night, when they were all in Bed. He told her, ſhe need only give him the Key that open'd all the Doors, and there being but one Hall to go through, to come to her, in which no body lay, he cou'd be there without being ſeen, or making any noiſe; and that

he wou'd be gone before day. The Widow told him, that her Woman, and her little Daughter, lay in a Closet within her Chamber, and that therefore he must not speak, nor make the least noise. She gave him the Key, and he did not fail of keeping the assignation. Madam *de Valoury* supply'd the Widows place, who had retired to another Room. Our Gallant came, and laid himself very softly down by his Wife, without being perceiv'd by any body in the House; she did not speak, and it was too dark for him to see her, so that it was no hard matter for her to pass for the Widow, in a place where he cou'd not imagine any other Woman wou'd be. Never Man was more charm'd with his good Fortune, nor in greater ecstasies of Pleasure! In fine, the poor Lady was afraid her Husband's Life, or at least his Health, was in danger. Day approaching he went away, and continu'd this little Commerce for some time; but the pleasantest part of the Adventure was, the Conversations he had in the day time with the Widow, expressing the dear Raptures of the Night, which he exaggerated to such a heighth, that she cou'd not refrain from laughing excessively. The better to divert her self with it, she ask'd him, coldly, the difference of those he tasted with

his

his Wife. With my Wife! (reply'd he) I never have any, 'tis but by Duty, or rather by neceſſity, I ever converſe with her; and if I had not need of her to raiſe my Money, (which I can't do without her) I ſhou'd never ſubmit to it. Her Fleſh (continued he) is looſe, her Skin rough, ſhe has no Neck, no moiſture, her Lips are cold and icy; can any thing be more nauſeous? We muſt own, (ſaid Madam *de Seligny*) lifting her hands and eyes to Heaven, that there are ſtrange unaccountable things in Love! *Valoury* has an averſion for his Wife when he knows her; her fleſh is looſe, her skin rough, ſhe has no Neck, no moiſture, and her Lips are without fire: And yet, when he takes her for another, ſhe has none of thoſe faults, and he has all the tenderneſs and paſſion for her imaginable. But whence comes this? (continued ſhe) who can give me a good reaſon for it? He took her (reply'd the Chevalier) for another than his Wife; change of Diet whets the Appetite. That argument is not juſt (return'd Madam *de Seligny*) ſince 'tis the ſame object he finds ſometimes diſagreeable and diſtaſtful, and ſometimes agreeable and charming. May be it is (reply'd *Berly*) that the Pleaſures of Marry'd People being permitted, they don't ſo lively affect the Senſes; Laws

and Prohibitions, make all Enjoyments the more reliſhing. And I remember a wild Expreſſion upon this Subject, which I have often heard in *Italy*, to exaggerate the moſt ſenſible Pleaſure, *Quale guſto ſi foſſe peccato.* Neither have you reaſon'd juſtly, (reply'd the Marchioneſs;) Madam *de Valoury* loves her Husband paſſionately, which, according to you, ſhe wou'd not do, ſince 'tis no Sin in her to love him. I ſee (continued ſhe) the true reaſon is that which I gave you juſt now, which is, That Love expires as ſoon as it is without agitation. *Valoury* had nothing to wiſh from his Wife, ſhe was all his, he diſpos'd as he pleas'd of her Perſon, and her Heart; and that is it which ſtifles Love. For his Miſtreſs, he went to her but at certain hours in the Night; no doubt there was danger in it, he had often fears, and apprehenſions, which nouriſh'd his Love, and redoubled his Tranſports, and inclination for his Wife, when he thought her his Miſtreſs. This puts me in mind (continued ſhe) of a Lady of my acquaintance, who is above forty years old, and yet her Husband is as fond of her as he was the firſt day he Marry'd her. And in this manner ſhe preſerves him ſo: She is in a continual reſervedneſs with him, haughty, and never ſuffers any familiarity; her Bed is

a-part, and if her Husband wou'd pass a Night with her, she puts on an affected shiness, and anger, makes him buy her favours, and give her every time a Jewel.

The End of the First Part.

THE SECOND PART.

WHilſt Madam *de Seligny* was talking thus a Lacquey came to let her know, that the Baronneſs of *Chardonnay*, and the Co[illegible]ſs of *Reall*, with the Viſcount *du Pin*, and the Commander of *Fuiſſez*, was come to wait upon her. Ah! Gentlemen, (cry'd the Marchioneſs) what Pleaſure are you going to have, in hearing this company talk upon the Subject of your Converſation! Theſe two Ladies, beſides that they are as beautiful as any in *Paris*, they have Wit like Angels. As ſhe ſpoke thus the Company came in, and after the firſt Civilities, when they were all ſeated, the Abbot *Sophin*, taking up the diſcourſe, ſaid to them, You are come very opportunely, Ladies, to decide a difficulty which is between *Philocrates* and *Alcander*, about Marriage: *Philocrates* maintains, That there is much more ſatis-

faction

faction, and less uneasiness, in the Life of a married Man, than of one who is not so; and *Alcander* is of a contrary Sentiment. What think you of it, Ladies? (interrupted the Marchioness.) That depends upon the choice of the Person (reply'd the Baronness of *Chardonnay*.) 'Tis almost impossible (answer'd *Alcander*) to choose well, in a time when a Woman disguises her self, and appears quite contrary to what she is, or what she will be; whether that be done by a natural temper, or by dissimulation, one does not suffer the less by it. Whatever pains a Woman takes, (continued the Baronness) she can't dissemble so well, as not to be discover'd by the clear-sighted. Well, Madam, (said *Alcander*) what quality do you require in a Woman to make a good Wife? That she be (reply'd the Baronness) Discreet, Devout, have Wit, and love her Husband. I have seen some (return'd *Alcander*) who had the Character in the World of possessing all those qualities, and yet their Husbands were not the more happy: What chagrin, what constraint, has not a Husband to suffer from a Wife who passes for Discreet? She is presumptuous, proud, full of her self; her Husband does nothing well; at every moment she opposes his Sentiments and his Conduct; she will dispose of all,

rule all, and imagines that (becauſe ſhe does not live in the Irregularity of other Women) her Husband ought to have the laſt Obligations to her for a Vertue, to which her Vanity is alone indebted. Nor will the Husband of a religious Wife have a better Bargain; ſhe'll let her ſelf be govern'd by intereſted Perſons, of falſe Judgments, who will diſtract her Brain, miſmanage her Actions, furniſh her Alcove with Deaths-heads, make her dreſs her ſelf in an antick and ſingular manner; and who, under a pretence of Devotion, will engage her to make her Family faſt, almoſt killing her Husband, Children, and Domeſticks with Hunger, and by her Whimſeys and Chagrins make a Hell of her Houſe. A witty Wife is no leſs to be fear'd; ſhe is inſolent, opinionate, and ill-natur'd; ſhe deſpiſes her Husband, looks upon him as an ignorant; nothing is well thought, but what ſhe imagines; and, inſtead of minding her Domeſtick Affairs, ſhe thinks of nothing but filling up ends of Rhimes, making Verſes, and ſeeking every month a good Place in the *Mercure Galant*. Tho' the Wife, who loves her Husband, ſeems to be the beſt Lot, ſhe is not the leaſt incommode, nor the leaſt burthen: as ſoon as the Husband is arriv'd at a certain Point, he has no more Paſſion,

no more Tenderneſs for his Wife; mean while when his Wife loves him, ſhe ſoon perceives his indifference; that creates Jealouſie, and night and day he hears nothing but reproaches; to hear her ſpeak, he is Perfidious, a Traytor, a Villain; how innocent ſoever his Actions are, ſhe interprets them criminally, and, upon the lighteſt ſuſpicions, writes to a Husband, or a Gallant, that his Wife, or his Miſtreſs betrays him; if her Husband laughs, or rallies with her, or careſſes her, that's, ſays ſhe, to conceal ſome new Treachery: If he is thoughtful or chagrin, 'tis for being with her, or his impatience to be with his Miſtreſs. You have heard of her, who upon a ſuſpicion that a magnificent Suit of Cloaths which her Husband had made, was to pleaſe a Lady who had a Suit of Ribbands of the ſame Colour, threw the Cloaths in the Fire before her Husband riſe: Of another, who, diſguis'd like a Footman, follow'd her Husband every where, to diſcover his Intrigues; and of that other, who, tranſported with her Jealouſie, met her Husband's Miſtreſs upon the high way, and, to give him a horror and diſguſt for her Perſon, made her be ſhamefully abuſed by her *Moor*, and her other Footmen, and treated like an infamous Proſtitute: Own, after this, that a

Man who is thus belov'd by his Wife has not a little to endure. You take all your Characters in their Extreams (reply'd *Philocrates*) a Woman may be diſcreet and devout, without being chagrin and troubleſome; witty, without being fantaſtick and proud; and may love her Husband, without being jealous. There are few Women (reply'd *Alcander*) who can keep the golden *Medium*; all they do is in exceſs. For my part (ſaid the Commander of *Fuiſſez*) if I were to chuſe a Wife, ſhe ſhould be handſome, witty and gay; I would have her love all manner of Pleaſure, Gaming, Balls, Walks, Plays, and Treats; in a word, that ſhe ſhou'd think of nothing but diverting her ſelf. You reaſon like a Soldier, (anſwer'd *Alcander*) that is, one of a Profeſſion for changing Wives; but a Husband has not that advantage after ſix months enjoyment of his handſome Wife, this witty, gay Wife, when he has ſeen her riſing from her Bed, with yellow Complexion, pale Lips, heavy Eyes, diſorder'd Head cloaths, and has heard her talk in her negligent hours, when ſhe does not obſerve her ſelf, or is out of humour, adieu Tenderneſs and Reſpect, adieu Eſteem; he takes his Purſe from her, refuſes her what Money ſhe would have for her Cloaths, her Orna-

ments

ments, and for Play; he repines at her, complains, won't bed with her; ſhe ſoon perceives the change: It muſt be reveng'd, ſays ſhe, Necklace, Rings, Crochet, Jewels, all is diſpos'd of to get Money; that does not ſuffice, a ſeparation muſt be made, he's an extravagant unthrift, cries ſhe, to the Judges, he keeps Miſtreſſes in Town, and has attempted againſt my Life; in fine, Suppoſitions, Lyes, Artifices, all is in ſeaſon for her: In this Interval the officious Lover proffers his aſſiſtance, ſhe accepts it: He, like the Husband, is tir'd of her, deſpiſes her, and leaves her: She takes another, and then another; and ſtrowing thus her Favours from Gallant to Gallant, ſhe quickly loſes her Honour and Reputation in the World: Her Husband knows all this, but dares not complain of it in Juſtice; he can get no Witneſſes, and her bare Accuſation will ſuffice to caſt him, and make him be condemned to a Reſtitution of his Wife's Portion, which ſhe has conſum'd the beſt part of. Judge, after this, if it be advantageous to marry a handſome Wife. Well then, marry her fooliſh and ugly, (return'd the Commander.) I ſhou'd not love (reply'd *Alcander*) to bluſh in Company at the Folly and Impertinence of my Wife. And for ugly (aſſumed the Chevalier) I don't adviſe him;

ſhe

she must paint, and that's a vast Expence to a Man. You appear very difficult and cautious (interrupted the Countess of *Reall*, addressing her self to *Alcander*) but 'tis such as you that are the soonest ensnar'd; and to give my Sentiments upon the Matter, 'tis more honourable and advantageous for a Man to marry, than to renounce it all his life: Yes (pursu'd she) after having seen the life and end of *Singamis* and *Agamis*, I shall always be of that Opinion. All the Company, who were divided upon *Philocrates* and *Alcander*'s Dispute, had a Curiosity to know their Story, and begg'd the Countess to give them a recital of it; which she did in these Words.

The History of Singamis *and* Agamis.

Singamis and *Agamis* were two Brothers, born of an illustrious Family, and had both very considerable Fortunes: My Mother was the deareſt Friend their Mother had in the World; who in dying commanded them to be govern'd by her; they obey'd her so well at first, that they did nothing of consequence without communicating it to her. When they were arriv'd to an Age which they might think of Marriage, my Mother spoke to them of it:

Her

Her Advice was, that they ſhould both marry; Religion, and the fine Eſtates they had, ſerv'd her for a Reaſon; but neither of them would hearken to it: *Agamis*, who was the eldeſt, had an invincible repugnancy to it, which ſhe could not ſurmount; but for *Singamis*, tho' he ſeem'd very averſe to it, yet ſhe reduc'd him, and undertook to provide him a ſuitable Match; and in this manner ſhe deſign'd it; ſhe would have her of ſome Fortune, but did not ſtand for a little more, or a little leſs; above all things ſhe requir'd, that ſhe ſhould be one born of a diſcreet and vertuous Mother, who had given her a good Education, perſwaded that the Daughter would have the ſame Inclinations; ſhe was ſo prepoſſeſt with that Belief, and had obſerv'd it ſo often, that when ſhe heard of the Looſneſs or Gallantry of any young Woman, ſhe never fail'd of raiſing her dead Mother, to ſhow that the Daughter had done nothing but by her Example: She did not deſire an extraordinary Beauty, ſaying, that its conſequences were dangerous; and provided that a Woman had a gentile Air, and nothing ſhocking in her Face or Shape, ſhe cou'd bear with the reſt; becauſe, ſaid ſhe, how deſtitute ſoever a Woman is of Beauty, if ſhe have Modeſty and Diſcretion, ſhe always

ways pleaſes: She believ'd the *je ne ſcai quoy*. Then (interrupted the Viſcount *du Pin*.) It was very neceſſary to interrupt me, (reply'd the Counteſs of *Real* briskly:) I declare if you do it again, I ſhall think my Story Fatigues, and will break it off: Yes, Monſieur the *Viſcount*, (continu'd ſhe ſmiling, and returning from her ſharpneſs) ſhe was ſo far perſwaded, that we feel for one another a certain *je ne ſcay quoy*, of Love or Hate, that before ſhe could determine in her choice of *Sophronia*, (in whom ſhe found all the Qualities ſhe look'd for to form a prudent Wife,) ſhe would know whether the *je ne ſcay quoy* was not contrary to her Deſigns; and thus purſu'd her Reſolutions. One day, having contriv'd that *Singamis* and *Sophronia* ſhould meet at a publick Place without knowing one another, and without having the leaſt knowledge of her Intentions; ſhe ſet her ſelf to rally *Sophronia*, to jear her very ſharply, and even to turn her into ridicule; 'twas eaſie to know in obſerving *Singamis*, what he would feel for *Sophronia*; in that moment the *je ne ſcay quoy* appear'd. The Youth ſuffer'd more than ſhe; he did his beſt to defend her; and in going out he own'd ſincerely to my Mother, that he had been vex'd at her for uſing the poor young Lady ſo ill. My Mother, without diſco-

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vering her ſelf, made him ſome little reproaches for it; and telling him ſhe had nothing of agreeable in her, drew a confeſſion from him, that ſhe wou'd pleaſe him better than another; that was what my Mother wiſh'd; ſhe made no longer a myſtery of her Deſigns; and, after having given him a Reaſon for all ſhe had done, ſhe made him conſent to marry *Sophronia*. What is moſt ſingular and remarkable in this Adventure is, that tho' many young People had taken *Sophronia*'s part againſt my Mother, ſhe had no Acknowledgments, and was only ſenſible of what *Singamis* had done for her: ſo much, that ſhe cou'd not forbear boaſting of it inceſſantly, as my Mother was afterwards informed; nor did ſhe delay to conclude the Marriage. Ah, *Alcander*, (cry'd the Counteſs of *Real* here,) how intirely will you alter your Opinion, when you have ſeen the different Conditions of theſe two Brothers in the courſe of their Lives, and in their Deaths! There was nothing but Sweetneſs, Satisfaction, Conſolations, Peace of Conſcience, and Glory, for *Singamis*, nothing but Shame, Scorn, Chagrin, Deſpair, and Remorſe for *Agamis*, as you are going to ſee.

Sophronia was officious, humble, and diſcreet with her Husband; and in her Family ſhe kept a charming mildneſs, mingled with a little ſeverity, with which ſhe

made her self belov'd, and engag'd all that belong'd to her to do their Duty, without ever brawling or quarrelling; and if any thing was out of order, with the juſteſt Reaſons, handſomely inſpired, ſhe informed their Judgments, and brought them firſt to condemn their own Errors themſelves; it was not poſſible but ſo engaging a Conduct muſt touch the heart of *Singamis*: But, in the mean time, his being married did not hinder him from having ſome little remainder of his former Inclinations, either for Entertainments, Gaming, or his old Miſtreſſes. *Singamis* lov'd to treat his Friends; *Sophronia* receiv'd them in the beſt manner in the World; ſhe had always an open and ſmiling Countenance; ſaid a hundred pretty things; and all things were ſo well order'd at her Houſe, that he was better pleas'd there than in any other Place. When *Singamis* return'd from Play very late, ſhe wou'd open the Door to him her ſelf, with an Air of Gaiety and Kindneſs; and if he chid her for not being in Bed, ſhe anſwer'd him that her Servants had wak'd ſeveral nights before; and that ſhe wou'd ſit up in her turn, that they might be the better able to ſerve him the next day; that ſhe cou'd ſleep in the morning; and that, in fine, ſhe had a mind to drink with him of the Liquor that was

to have ready againſt his coming home. If ſhe obſerv'd in her Husband's Face any regret for his Loſſes at Play, without ſeeming to perceive it, ſhe wou'd ſpeak to him of People who were to bring him money very ſhortly, and always turn'd the ſtate of their Affairs on the beſt ſide: What ſhe had the moſt pain to diſgeſt, was his correſpondence with his former Miſtreſſes; however ſhe did not complain of it, nor ſhow the leaſt diſcontent in her Face: but when ſhe had made any new Diſcovery upon it, ſhe wou'd retire into her Cloſet, to vent her Grief in Tears: If her Husband ſurpriz'd her in that condition, immediately wiping her Eyes, and concealing her Sadneſs, ſhe recover'd her former Looks, and liv'd evenly with him: If he prevented her, and unaccus'd, offer'd to juſtifie himſelf, ſhe receiv'd all he ſaid with a mild and ſubmiſſive Air, letting him underſtand that ſhe did not think her ſelf deſerving enough to poſſeſs him intirely, and that ſhe was not born for ſo great a Happineſs. Tho' ſo diſcreet and charming a Behaviour, as *Sophronia*'s, was capable of withdrawing *Singamis* from all his youthful Extravagancies, a Son and Daughter which ſhe had by him, and to whom ſhe had given an extraordinary good Education, were no little helps to her;

Guittarr to perfection, and underſtood Heraldry, Geography, Chronology and Hiſtory. Admire what Power a wiſe and vertuous Wife, aſſiſted by amiable and well-educated Children, has over her Husband's Mind, to bring him to his Duty. This Man, who lov'd nothing but Gaming, Feaſting, Women, and Drinking, plays now no more but with his Children, will eat no where but in his own Houſe, and can endure no other Company but his Wife's. I can't (ſaid he often to my Mother,) I can't enough admire my change; I us'd all my Endeavours before I was marry'd to cure my ſelf of my paſſion for Play; I was inceſſantly in the Tavern, and among Women, notwithſtanding the many reproaches I made my ſelf for it, and the remorſe I ſuffer'd; but now I have ſo great a horror and diſguſt for thoſe ſort of things, that I cannot conceive what ſatisfaction I found in 'em then: My only Pleaſure is in being with my Wife and Children: I paſs my days the moſt agreeably imaginable in ſeeing them play together and careſs one another; and all my ambition is bounded in giving them a good Education, and making them a conſiderable Fortune. As the Counteſs of *Rea* ſpoke thus, the Baronneſs of *Chardonnay* interrupting her, ſaid, Madam, 'tis impoſſible to be better pleas'd than we are

with hearing you; and we are resolv'd not to leave you till you have finished your Relation, tho Play time approaches, and that we have engag'd our selves to be there as you know. I understand you, reply'd the Countess; you would have me make an end, I will obey you, Madam; besides *Alcander* suffers too much by the recital of what Pleasures *Singamis* enjoy'd in Marriage; but let him not deceive himself, he will be yet worse entertain'd with all I have to say to him of *Agamis*.

To conclude. (continu'd the Countess) *Singamis* and *Sophronia*, having made it their whole business and pleasure to form the Minds and Hearts of their Children, and to give them great Fortunes, they made them the most finish'd Persons, and the most desir'd Matches in *Paris*, and marry'd them into the Families of some of the chief Ministers of State; which gave them a great elevation in the World, and being the occasion of making *Singamis*'s Merit known, the King gave him a considerable Employment, in which he grew old with Honour, and dy'd with Firmness and Constancy in the Arms of his Wife, who softned his last moments, by telling him, that they cou'd not be said to dye, who left such Children as his behind them. After his Death, *Sophronia* dispos'd of what he

had left, and retir'd into a Convent, where she dy'd with a lasting Fame of Sanctity.

You have seen, (pursu'd the Countess,) the Life and Death of *Singamis*, who marry'd by my Mother's Advice; and I am going to tell you, that of *Agamis* his Brother, who wou'd never hear of it; after which you shall judge if I have not reason to advise for Marriage.

Agamis, young, handsome, rich, of quality, gallant, unmarried, and designing never to marry, did not fail of finding those sort of lucky Adventures, after which young People run with so much avidity; however passing whole hours hid in a Closet, and sometimes in a Chest, scarcely daring to breathe; getting hastily down upon Linen ty'd together, from a Chamber-window into the street, by the Favour of the Night, and in fear of being surpriz'd by the Watch; hearing, as he was retiring home, Musquet-balls about his Ears; being attack'd by Assassinates; Ingratitude and Infidelity of Mistresses, Doctors, Chyrurgeons, almost always at his Heels, were Inconveniences which dishearten'd *Agamis* from aiming at these imaginary good Fortunes, and made him take the resolution of fixing himself to one Person, with whom he fansied he might lead [illegible] agreeable Life. He cast his Eyes

upon *Scortina*, who was a Maid under the Conduct of a Mother, uneaſie in her Fortune, and of a humour to ſuffer all things for a good Entertainment, or the ſmalleſt Profit: *Scortina* plaid her part to admiration; ſhe was no great Beauty, but had in her Air, and in her Carriage, I know not what of tender, and moving, which charm'd, and with which ſhe engag'd *Agamis* very far. To have ſeen her, you wou'd have thought her the diſcreeteſt, moſt reſerv'd young Woman in *France*; and ſhe had already deceiv'd many, who had look'd upon her as a Prize; but *Agamis* fell deeper in the ſnare than all the reſt; *Billets-doux*, Verſes, Declarations of Love, Plays, Opera's, Rings, Crochet of Diamonds, Pearl-necklaces; in fine, all ways were try'd before he cou'd be heard; and then he muſt believe, ſhe yielded but to the violent Paſſion ſhe had for him. One day as he importun'd her, (judge of the Character of this cunning Creature,) ſhe threw her ſelf at his Feet, proteſted ſhe had never lov'd any Man ſo much as ſhe lov'd him; and burſting into Tears, conjur'd him not to ruine her, in making an ill uſe of the tenderneſs ſhe had for him. This Diſcourſe ſtopp'd *Agamis*, who was an Enemy to all Violence. You will love me no more my Dear, (continu'd ſhe,) and

then arising triumphantly, she went and threw her self upon a Couch, from whence she look'd upon *Agamis* with insulting Eyes: The poor Youth has own'd to me since, that he was upon the Point of going to ask her Pardon, when she rowling her dying Eyes pretended to swound away: *Agamis* run to her assistance, and insensibly forgetting his Vertue, he gave himself up to the transport of his Love; not *Lucretia* ravish'd show'd such lively, or such ardent Sentiments of Grief and Vengeance; twenty times she leap'd to *Agamis*'s Sword, and as often offer'd to kill her self. Dissembling *Jilt*! 'twas only to give him the greater *Idea* of her: You imagine well enough, that having begun with this artifice, she made use of many others. To have judged by Appearances, she had an affection for *Agamis* beyond all that can be conceiv'd; upon the least disorder or chagrin he had, she was inconsolable; never Woman appear'd so disinteressted; for him (she said) she wou'd have sacrific'd her Fortune, Life, and Honour; she had had a general aversion for all Men, and cou'd not conceive how she was capable of so violent a Passion for *Agamis*; mean while this was all meer cunning and dissimulation, in which her Interest only was concern'd; and it was nothing for her to entertain two

or three Men at once; but the poor credulous *Agamis* gave up his Faith entirely to all she said, and believ'd himself the happiest of Men, in having found a Person so sensible, so vertuous, and one who lov'd him so tenderly; which made him free himself from all other Engagements, that he might be wholly hers; as soon as she perceiv'd it, she begun with making herself Mistress of his House; she chang'd all his Servants; wou'd have the Purse in pretence of good Huswifery; and influenc'd him in such a manner, as to make him quarrel with his Relations, and break with all his former Friends. In fine, all his Affairs were manag'd by *Scortina*'s Order: She had a Son, upon which the wretched *Agamis* madly doted, and thought of nothing but deceiving the Laws, to make him Heir of all his Estate after his Death. *Scortina*, taking hold of that occasion, prevail'd with him in a Sickness which he had, to enter into many Obligations to her advantage, and some of her Gallants; by which he thought he cou'd hazard nothing, having them in his possession. To conclude, *Scortina*'s Son gave *Agamis* a thousand disturbances; he wou'd be all the day in Taverns and ill Houses, and frequented none but Robbers; by and by they bring him home drunk, and without sense; at

other times dangerously wounded; another day he must be hid, because he has kill'd or wounded some body; and many times he was in Prisons, and upon the Point of receiving a shameful and ignominious Sentence: In fine, his Brutality arriv'd to that heighth, that he offer'd several times to beat, and even kill both *Agamis* and *Scortina*: And, for her part, she liv'd no better than her Son at last; but gave her self to a thousand Rogues, with whom she drank, and committed a hundred other Infamies; which compleated the ruine of her Reputation and her Health: She communicated her Distemper to *Agamis*, who then began to know her, and wou'd have taken measures to get himself out of her hands; but she perceiv'd it, upon which she gave him a slow Poison; stole the Key of his Cabinet from him, and took his Money, and all the Obligations he had sign'd in the time of his Sickness; retir'd from his House, and by virtue of these Obligations made his Goods be seiz'd on, and despoil'd him of them all; so that the unhappy *Agamis*, abandon'd and despis'd by all the World, spoil'd and ruin'd by the Disease, and the Poison she had given him, dy'd in extreme Misery, and in the highest Desperation.

The Counteſs of *Reall* had no ſooner ceaſed to ſpeak, than all the Company declar'd for Marriage, and was of *Philocrates*'s Opinion: The Marchioneſs of *Seligny* declar'd her ſelf with more violence than the reſt; ſhe ſaid that a vertuous Wife has always certain Sentiments of Honour in her Heart, which gives incomparably more ſatisfaction, than the irregular Manners of a Miſs; and that a legitimate Child finds in himſelf the Dignity of his Origin; whereas a natural Child expreſſes, for the moſt part, in his Actions, the ſhame of his Birth, and the irregularity of his Parents corrupted Manners; and ended, ſaying with a ſharp and raillying Tone, that one muſt have a mind of a very uncommon and fantaſtick Character, to defend a contrary Opinion. However *Alcander* ſtill perſiſted in his, and even maintain'd that they had never ſeen ſuch Enormities committed by Miſſes, or Baſtards, as had been acted by Wives, and legitimate Children. Have we not known, ſaid he, a legitimate Daughter, harbour for three years, and put in execution the horrible Deſign of poiſoning her own Father, who lov'd her tenderly, and from whom ſhe had receiv'd a thouſand Kindneſſes? Was there ever any thing heard of to parallel that, done by a natural Child? Have not we lately ſeen a Wife,

who had given Money to have her Husband be assassinated; another, who had rais'd a false accusation against hers, which wou'd have expos'd him to a most cruel and ignominious Death: Did ever such things enter into the Thoughts of a Mistress, or illegitimate Child; and yet they have been acted by lawful Wives and Children, and those of Quality. They say *Scortina* poison'd *Agamis*, how probable is that? His Death wou'd have made too great a noise in the World; and so black an Action cou'd not have escap'd the Rigours of *la Chambre ardente*: It may be indeed she robb'd him; but how many Wives have done as much, (continu'd he, looking with a malicious smile upon the *Marchioness* of *Seligny*,) upon which she blush'd. The Baroness perceiv'd it; and, fearing the Conversation shou'd grow too hot, to prevent it, rose hastily; and, casting her Eyes upon her Watch, said she fear'd the Play was begun, and that they must not lose time, but go thither immediately; which she did with all the Company, except *Philocrates*, *Alcander*, and the Abbot of *Sophin*, who were more for walking. The Coach was scarce out of St. *Germains*, when *Alcander* taking up the Discourse, said, what shocking, extravagant Women are here?! ow does that Baroness of *Chardonnay*

dare with an inch thick of red and white upon her face, to maintain that Air of Reſervedneſs and Gravity? That confident Counteſs of *Reall*, ought not ſhe to have dy'd with ſhame, in reciting ſuch an imprudent Story as *Scortina*'s; and for that Extravagance of *Seligny*, what think you of her, to rob her Husband, leave him, and ſue him to a ſeparation, becauſe he loves her too well? How I pity (proceeded he) the unfortunate Men who are troubled with ſuch Wives. Ah, how free is my *Lesbia* from thoſe ſort of defects? All the Women I ſee, ſerve only to make her appear the more agreeable to me; pure Water is all her Paint; but meeting a Man's Eyes makes her bluſh; ſhe keeps two thouſand *Lowis'd'ores* for me, which I think ſafer with her than in my own Cabinet; and is ſo diſintereſted, that I cou'd ſcarce oblige her to receive the Ruby which I gave her. All that *Lesbia* has done for you, (interrupted *Philocrates*,) comes not near the Obligations I have to *Frandeliſa*; ſhe had broke off with *Philabell*, was reſolv'd to leave the World, and confine her ſelf to a Convent, but for me alone has chang'd her reſolution, and me alone ſhe loves.

As *Philocrates* ſpoke thus, the Sky had cover'd it ſelf with a Cloud ſo thick and

dark, that they cou'd hardly with the help of the Lights distinguish their way; which oblig'd their Coachman to drive as fast as he cou'd to the next Tavern. *Philocrates*, *Alcander*, and the Abbot *Sophin*, being come out of the Coach, went into the first Room in the Tavern, where they found two Gentlemen who contested together about the Value and Beauty of a Ruby; he that had it in his hand, and who was the Owner of it, said, that it was an Oriental Ruby, the other affirm'd that it was not: *Alcander* calling to mind, that tho' the Ruby which he had giv'n *Lesbia* was a very good one, many People had taken it for false, had a Curiosity to see that which the Gentlemen held; and stepping softly forward behind him, he saw it very near; it seem'd to him extremely to resemble that he had presented *Lesbia* with, which caus'd some disturbance in him: He who had the Ruby having turn'd his Head, and seen *Alcander* in that condition, hastily hid it; and notwithstanding the violent Rain, went presently out of the Tavern accompany'd with the Person with whom he was.

I wou'd fain know (said *Alcander*) who that Gentleman is to whom the Ruby belongs. I don't know him, (reply'd *Philocrates*;) but for him that was with him, I

can tell you his Name, (continu'd he;) 'tis *Philabel*, he that was desperately in love with *Fraudeliſa*, whom ſhe cou'd not endure, and whoſe Viſits ſhe refus'd, becauſe of his too free and diſreſpectful carriage. 'Tis the Owner of the Ruby (interrupted *Alçander*) that I would know; methinks his is very like that which I gave to *Lesbia*, and I wou'd fain find out from whence he had it. He is really jealous, (anſwer'd *Philocrates*, laughing,) and thinks *Lesbia* gave his Ruby to that Man. I am very far from it, (return'd *Alçander*,) I know *Lesbia* too well to do her that Injuſtice; the poor Creature was like to dye for Grief when ſhe loſt it, and I had much ado to comfort her.

Tho' *Alcander* was very confident of *Lesbia*'s Fidelity, yet the quick and confus'd manner with which he had hid the Ruby, the precipitation with which he had gone out of the Tavern, tho' it rain'd violently, and the reſemblance he found in his Ruby to that which he had giv'n *Lesbia*, diſquieted him, and gave him a Chagrin; which was perceiv'd by the Abbot, and which oblig'd him to call one of his Servants, and command him to inform himſelf with addreſs, of the Names of thoſe two Gentlemen. The Fellow told him, that apparently he ſhou'd not have much

difficulty

difficulty in learning them; that they had ſent a Footman back to the Tavern to ſtay for the Anſwer of a Letter which was to be brought thither; that he was a Country-Fellow whom it wou'd be eaſie to manage with a Bottle. One of the two, (ſaid *Alcander* to the Servant,) has a Ruby; if thou canſt learn from whom he had it, and how, what Obligation ſhall I have to thee, and how grateful ſhall I be? The Servant promis'd him to uſe all his Endeavours for his ſatisfaction, and ſo went out of the room in order to it.

In the mean time, *Philocrates*, *Alcander*, and the Abbot, fell to making Reflections upon what they had ſeen. *Alcander* ſaid, that never any Ruby had more reſembled that which he had giv'n *Lesbia*, and that in ſeeing them together one might be deceiv'd. *Philocrates* alledg'd that moſt Rubies were alike, and that it was very difficult to know their difference: The Abbot did not know what to think of the ſurprize and aſtoniſhment theſe two Men were in, and of their haſty retreat notwithſtanding the Rain. *Philocrates*, with a diſdainful and raillying Air, ſaid, *Philabell*, affected with his being to marry *Fraudeliſa*, cou'd not bear his ſight, and therefore was retir'd: In fine, every one reaſon'd after his Fancy, till the Abbot's Servant came to inform

inform them, that the Owner of the Ruby was call'd *Cleanthus*; that a Lady had presented him with it, who was very shortly to give him two thousand *Lowis d'ore's*, and to be marry'd to him; that that Footman, (who belong'd to *Cleanthus*,) did not know the Lady's Name, but had only told him, that one day she and *Cleanthus* being in an Arbour in the Garden of St. *Clous*, and talking together, he had hid himself behind the Arbour, where he heard all that he told him.

After the Servant had giv'n this Account, and was retir'd, *Philocrates* casting his Eyes upon the pensive *Alcander*; 'Tis then thy *Lesbia*, (said he to him,) that Maid so mov'd with the loss of the Ruby thou had'st giv'n her: Alas! that Accident seem'd to her a presage that thou woud'st cease to love her; she believ'd 'twou'd be her death, poor Girl: Dost thou observe how disinterested she is, and how faithfully she keeps thy two thousand *Lowis d' Ore's*? That Maid so free from all Engagements, who hated for thy sake all other Men; that Heart which thou hast kept so well in breath, by the diversity of Exercise thou gav'st it, and by the fear of losing thee: In fine, that Heart which lov'd thee in a manner so nice, so delicate, and so unknown to marry'd People.

Don't

Don't insult over the unhappy, (reply'd *Alcander*;) In whom shou'd one confide! cry'd he; *Lesbia* give my Ruby to a Wretch, a Fellow without Name! *Lesbia* unfaithful to me! *Lesbia* treacherous! *Lesbia* resolv'd to rob me!

In whom shou'd one confide, (interrupted *Philocrates*,) in a Maid of Quality, well educated, and who looks upon you as her Husband; in fine, in *Fraudelissa*, in whom appears a thousand charming Qualities, a thousand Vertues? This Conversation was interrupted by the noise of a Footman, who had brought a Letter, and ask'd for *Philabell* in the Court.

Philocrates looking out of the Window, saw that it was *Fraudelissa*'s Footman, which made him colour: *Alcander* observing it, had a mind to see who it was, and he knew him too; so that without giving any hint of his Suspicion, that perhaps he had brought the Answer, which *Cleanthus*'s Footman waited for, he went immediately down; and having found in a passage, through which the Fellow must needs pass, a corner so dark that one cou'd hardly discern any body in it, he plac'd himself there to wait for him; and as soon as he was near enough, ask'd him softly for *Fraudelissa*'s Letter, at the same time putting a Crown in his hand: The Footman,

who

who cou'd not ſee him that ſpoke to him by reaſon of the obſcurity, did not go to imagine that it might be ſome other than *Philabel*, who ask'd for the Letter; and not being very ſorry to have a Crown, he took it haſtily, gave the Letter without making any farther reflection, and went his way. *Alcander* as ſoon return'd to the room where he had left his Friends; and after having unſeal'd the Letter, he gave it *Philocrates*, asking him if he knew the hand; *Philocrates* anſwer'd that it ſeem'd to be *Fraudeliſa*'s: And then *Alcander* told him how he got it; which you may imagine gave both him and the Abbot an extreme impatience to read it: And in theſe Terms it was conceiv'd.

LETTER.

YOU are ignorant of what force the firſt Engagements have, and you as little know my Heart, when you imagine it capable of loving any Man but you; if I marry Philocrates, *I ſubmit to the cruel and terrible Commands of a Father, who will ſacrifice me to that great Law-ſuit which has ſo long devour'd his Family. The Heart of the Victim will not then be found of the Sacrifice; 'tis deſtin'd for a cruel, for thee, ungrateful Man.*

Alcander

Alcander had no ſooner read this Letter, than returning it to *Philocrates*, and looking upon him with a ſerious Air, he ſpoke to him in theſe Words: This Letter (ſaid he to him) makes me change my Sentiments, converts me from my Errors, and reconciles me to Marriage. Ah, *Philocrates*, (continu'd he,) how happy are you, that can for your whole Life engage to your ſelf a Maid of ſo much Honour, one who loves you ſo faithfully! See how ſhe hates *Philabel*, that imprudent, unmannerly Man, who made the poor Girl bluſh ſo often; how regular and agreeable a Life are you going to live together; the more you ſee her, the more you will diſcover her extraordinary Qualities, and the more you will be ſatisfy'd with your choice; you will make of your Duty a ſoft habitude of loving one another; ſhe will furniſh you with a thouſand innocent Pleaſures, withdraw you from Debauchery, by an exceſs of lawful Joys; ſhe will bring you the comfort of fine Children, and the Letter ſhe has writ to *Philabel* aſſures you of it. Here *Alcander*, quitting his Gravity, cou'd not forbear laughing heartily; and, in that moment, the Coachman came in to advertiſe them, that the Rain was over, but that there remain'd ſo thick a Cloud in the Air, that it ſeem'd

to

to threaten a more furious Storm than the firſt; and that he cou'd not anſwer for carrying them back, unleſs they ſet out preſently; they order'd him to be ready.

The Abbot *Sophin*, ſeeing *Philocrates* and *Alcander*, as it were out of themſelves, ſpoke to them in this manner. You have no cauſe to laugh, nor one, nor t'other, and if any thing can diſengage you from Women, it muſt be what you have now ſeen; not that you ſhou'd judge of all by *Lesbia* and *Fraudeliſa*; there are ſtill ſome Women of Honour and Fidelity. The buſineſs is not (interrupted *Alcander*) to diſengage us from Women, to condemn or to commend 'em; we know enough of them already: But now the Point is to judge between us, and to know if it is advantageous to marry, and if there is in Marriage more ſatisfaction than chagrin. The Queſtion appears to me very difficult to decide, (reply'd the Abbot;) but if you will know what are the firſt Thoughts that preſent themſelves to me upon the Matter, I think that the Conſtitution ought to be the only Rule in this difficulty: If you feel in your heart an indifference, or an averſion for a Wife, and for Children, don't marry; for Marriage then will certainly give you more chagrin than pleaſure: If on the contrary, you find in

your

your ſelf a diſpoſition, and an inclination for 'em, you will do much better to marry; not that you are to hope for a real and a ſolid Happineſs, there is none in any Condition of this Life, and leſs in Marriage than in all others; but the lawful Pleaſures of that State may ſerve to ſoften the chagrin and pains of Life; to hinder your Wife from falling into Diſorders and Debauchees, and to temper her ill humour and uneaſineſs; you will receive Services from her; you'll have the pleaſure of knowing your ſelf again in your Children; they will be as Bonds to unite you more ſtrongly together, and you will find your Mind and Conſcience in another Seat, than with a Miſtreſs intereſted and unfaithful. In a word, evil for evil, 'tis better to live with a Wife, who lets herſelf go but rarely, and that by weakneſs, to ſome Infidelity, than to be all your days expos'd to the Perils, which your Fortune, Life, and Reputation hazards, with a Woman, who having no lawful tie for you, and being without Honour or Religion, is capable of undertaking all things, to ſatisfie her Pleaſure and her Paſſion.

As *Alcander* was a going to anſwer, the Coachman came to them again, and oblig'd them for fear of a ſecond Storm to take Coach, and return to their ſeveral Lodgings.

THE THIRD PART.

IN the ſame time that *Philocrates* main-tain'd, that there was more Satisfacti-on than Uneaſineſs in Marriage; that *Alcander* affirm'd the contrary; and that both entreated the Abbot *Sophin* to be their Judge upon the Queſtion, Whether it was more advantageous to marry than to live ſingle: *Lesbia*, who had been *Fraudeliſa*'s Friend ever ſince they had been Penſioners together in the ſame Convent, came to viſit her. 'Tis to wiſh you (ſaid ſhe, running to embrace her) all Happi-neſs, a thouſand Pleaſures in your Marri-age. Yes, my Dear (return'd *Fraudeliſa*, preſſing her in her Arms) I am going to be the happieſt Woman in the World, ſince I am to marry *Philocrates*. I will believe it (reply'd *Lesbia* with a ſerious Tone, ſeating her ſelf by her) but then your Deſtiny muſt have ſomething in it very ſingular, and *Philocrates* muſt not be like other Men. How many Women (purſu'd

ſhe)

ſhe) lament night and day their having ever engag'd in Marriage? Can that be poſſible my Dear (anſwer'd *Fraudeliſa*)? 'Tis a dreadful thing (reſum'd *Lesbia*) to ſubject one's ſelf for ever to the Will and Infirmities of a Man, whom one knows but through an intereſted Gallantry, and an infinite number of Artifices and Diſguiſes: he is no ſooner become your Huſband, than he looks upon himſelf as a Maſter, who has an abſolute Empire over you, he neglects you, deſpiſes you, and think 'tis againſt his Gravity, and he does you a great Favour, when he receives your Careſſes. I apprehend nothing on that ſide (returned *Fraudeliſa*) *Philocrates* loves me with a Paſſion too tender and conſtant. You may find other Troubles in Marriage (continu'd *Lesbia*) as, the Evils and Accidents that attend, the Breeding, Bearing, and Lying-in of Children and the Afflictions that their Sickneſs cauſes, or their Death. Well (reply'd *Fraudeliſa*) the Pleaſure of bringing a Husband that one loves, a Child which he deſires, recompences the Pain; if they are ſick, there are Servants to take care of them, and if they die (purſu'd ſhe Smiling) for one loſt two gain'd. Do you reckon for nothing (aſſum'd *Lesbia*) the Cares, and Diſquiets which is caus'd by the Deſire

and Ambition of raiſing your Children, and making them great, and the part you take in the Fatigues and Troubles the poor Husband endures, to make his Fortune, or to preſerve that which he has? I ſhall know how to govern my Thoughts (anſwer'd *Fraudeliſa*) to bound my Fortune, and my Ambition, and apply my ſelf intirely to pleaſe my Husband, by my Kindneſs, and good Humour; and with us I need not fear wanting, we ſhall have Eſtate enough, and our Parents have taken care to ſettle it well. How many Men (reply'd *Lesbia*) have had greater Riches, and high Employments, who are now in Neceſſity, or whoſe Widows and Children live in Miſery and Servitude? but I'll allow (continu'd ſhe) that your Family remain in Honour and Opulency, who will aſſure you that this Husband's Heart who is pleas'd with himſelf, and ſeeks for every day new Reliſhes of Joy and Pleaſure, ſhall always love you, with that yellow Complexion, thoſe pale and livid Lips, and that lean Face which your many Children will without doubt bring you; whilſt he who goes into the World, ſees Women every day, as beautiful as Angels, who offer him their Favours? As *Lesbia* ſpoke thus, the Widow of a Merchant Jeweller came to ſee *Fraudeliſa*; 'twas to ſell her a Pearl Neck-

lace

lace. This Woman had let her have many Jewels at a very low rate, which occasion'd a great Intimacy betwixt them. See (said she to *Fraudeliſa* turning the Necklace on all sides, and giving it to her) look upon this delicate Drop, of what Bigneſs and Roundneſs it is. I'll warrant it right Eaſtern, or I'll have nothing for it; 'tis to be sold for six hundred *Lowis*; and if the Lady whoſe it is, and who has made a falſe one like it to deceive her Husband, had not play'd unfortunately at *Baſſet*, you shou'd not have it at that price. *Fraudeliſa* told the Woman she wou'd shew it to some that underſtood such thing, and then give her an Anſwer. *Lesbia* who knew this Woman, by having seen her often at her Mothers, and having bought some Jewels of her, and knowing that her Husband had not been long dead, ask'd her if she was marry'd again. She reply'd, That she was very far from it; that there was no Condition so happy as that of a Widow; that she is independant, lives as she pleaſes, and is ſafe from thoſe Reproaches which are uſually given to Old Maids. You may change your thoughts (return'd *Lesbia.*) I marry again (Interrupted the Woman raiſing her Voice, and lifting up her Shoulders) God keep me from it; I have had too

much of that already. Marriage was not made for ſuch Wretches as I. Why ſo (anſwer'd *Lesbia*?) Men of our Rank (reply'd the Widow) look upon their Wives as their Servants, upon the firſt Diſquiet they ſcold at them, call 'em a hundred Names, and if they anſwer, threaten to break their Heads; they muſt have their Miſtreſſes in Town, but if the poor Wife entertain a little Intrigue, and they happen to perceive it, they rage like Devils, and are ready to kill her, as if that ought not to be reciprocal. It is not ſo (continu'd ſhe) with Women of Quality, their Husbands will ſee nothing, and whatever preſents it ſelf to their eyes, they turn 'em from it, to prevent the Noiſe and Scandal. Let me tell you, Ladies, what my Fate was with my late Husband, and you ſhall judge if I have reaſon to think of Marrying again. I brought him a great deal of Houſhold-Goods, and Money, and at the beginning of our Marriage, one would have thought, by what he ſaid, he would always love me; I ſhou'd be Miſtreſs of all, and ſhou'd never want any thing: but in a little time the Scene was changed, he became ſo ſurly, and ſo uneaſie, that he cou'd not endure me; there was nothing but Grumbling and Quarreling perpetually; he car'd for nothing but

playing at Bowls, being in Taverns, and with his Wenches, and never came home but late at night, ſtinking of Wine and Tobacco, furious as a Lion, ſwearing and railing at me and his Children. If he was ſick, I was forc'd to ſpend the whole days and nights in ſerving him, and to ſell my Merchandize at Under-Rates, for Money to defray the Expences of his Sickneſs; and for all my Recompence, he told me I was a wicked Slut, that already wiſh'd to ſee him bury'd. After his Death, the Charge of the Funeral, and his Debts, have conſum'd the beſt part of what I had, and I have five Children left, and a Shop ill ſtock'd, upon which my Induſtry muſt maintain us. Judge now, fair *Lesbia*, if I can ever deſire a ſecond Marriage. As the Woman ſpoke thus, a Footman of *Alcander*'s ask'd for *Lesbia*, and deſir'd to ſpeak with her in private. 'Twas one ſhe had plac'd in his Service, that he might give her an Account of all his Maſter did, or ſaid, when he was from her. He told her how the Rain had conſtrain'd *Philocrates*, *Alcander*, and the Abbot *Sophin*, to go into a Tavern, where they had found *Cleanthus* and *Philabel* diſputing about the Value of a Ruby, which appertain'd to *Cleanthus*; in what manner *Alcander* had ſeen the Ruby, that he thought it extreamly

resembled that which he had given her, and how he had made *Cleanthus*'s Servant be examin'd upon it: he added, that the Foot-man had answer'd, that a young Lady, whose Name he did not know, had given it to his Master, and that she intended to present him with two thousand *Lewis d'Ors* more, and to be marry'd to him; that *Alcander* had believ'd her to be the Person of whom he spoke, and was sensibly touch'd with it; and how *Philocrates* jeer'd him when he perceiv'd it. After this he related to her, that at the same time a Footman of *Frandelisa*'s who had brought a Letter, ask'd for *Philabel* in the Court before the Tavern; that *Alcander* (knowing from the Window where he was, to whom the Footman belong'd) had suspected a Commerce of Gallantry betwixt *Frandelisa* and *Philabel*, and to discover it, went to intercept the Letter; that he had plac'd himself in such an obscure Corner, that it was impossible to distinguish Persons; where as soon as the Footman came, *Alcander* ask'd him for *Frandelisa*'s Letter, giving him a Crown, which he took, and deliver'd the Letter; that *Alcander* open'd it, and gave it to *Philocrates*, who knew it to be *Frandelisa*'s hand; and that he had read it to *Alcander*, and the Abbot. This Footman added, that he cou'd not remem-

ber the Words of the Letter, but that he only knew the Sence to be, that she marry'd *Philocrates* against her Will, to obey her Father, and that she shou'd always love *Philabel*. He likewise told *Lesbia*, how *Alcander* had laugh'd in his turn at *Philocrates*, for having been so confident that *Fraudeliſa* lov'd him alone; and in fine, all that had been said by the Abbot and them. And when *Lesbia* seem'd to wonder how he shou'd know so much, he told her, that he had hid himself in a Closet which join'd to the Room where they were, from whence he had heard all. When he had given *Lesbia* this Information, he left her, to return to his Master, from whom he had stole away to seek for her. This Relation affected *Lesbia* in such a manner, and made so violent an Impression upon her Face, that *Fraudeliſa* perceiv'd it, and askt her what was the Cause of it? She reply'd, that it proceeded in part from the Concern she had for her Interests; and *Fraudeliſa* pressing her to express her self more clearly, she askt her if she had not writ that day to *Philabel*, and what the Letter contain'd. This Discourse gave an Alarm to *Fraudeliſa*'s Heart, which made her entreat *Lesbia* to tell her quickly all she knew of it. *Lesbia* let her understand that she was unwilling

willing to ſpeak more plainly before the Woman who was there: the Widow perceiving it, told her, that a Woman of her Trade knew much of thoſe Affairs; that ſhe had learn'd a great deal in carrying Pearls and Diamonds to People of Quality's Houſes; that they might confidently rely upon her Fidelity and Diſcretion; that ſhe had admirable Talents for managing a Galantry; that ſhe found a very great Pleaſure in making Lovers happy; and that if *Lesbia* wou'd ſpeak boldly, they ſhould both ſee what a skilful Perſon ſhe was. *Lesbia*, who was as uneaſie, and as much perplex'd as *Fraudeliſa*, was raviſh'd to know the Widows Talent, that ſhe might make uſe of it in her Turn if ſhe found it as extraordinary as ſhe promis'd: So that ſhe continued telling *Fraudeliſa*, that the Letter which ſhe had writ that day to *Philabel* had been intercepted, and was in the hands of *Philocrates*, with all the manner of that Accident. Immediately *Fraudeliſa* call'd her Footman, and askt him, to whom he had given her Letter: he anſwer'd (in a little Confuſion) that he had given it to *Philabel*: but *Lesbia* preſſing him to tell her whether he was certain that he had ſeen *Philabel*, he confeſt, that by reaſon of the Darkneſs of the place where he was when he gave him the

Letter, he cou'd not diſcern his Face, but that he was ſure 'twas *Philabel*, becauſe he ſpoke firſt to him, and ask'd him for *Fraudeliſa*'s Letter.

Fraudeliſa having ſent away the Servant, chiding him, and being perſwaded that undoubtedly *Philocrates* had her Letter, was ſo ſenſibly touch'd with it, that ſhe fell down upon a Couch, and lay for ſome time as immovable; then coming to her ſelf, ſhe ſpoke theſe Words, interrupted with many grievous Sighs: You look upon me then, *Philocrates*, as an ingrate, as an unfaithful Woman, that would have deceiv'd you with a falſe affected Tenderneſs: Ah wretched *Fraudeliſa!* ah unhappy *Philocrates!* cry'd ſhe; under what unlucky Planet are we born! Oh that you cou'd one moment ſee the Sentiments of Eſteem and Love I have for you, and thoſe of Hatred and Diſdain which I have for *Philabel!* but no, I never can let you ſee it, and I have now no Choice to make but Death: What Conſolation ſhou'd I find in that if I cou'd leave thee in thy Heart an eternal Reproach for thy unjuſt Opinion of me. But my Dear (interrupted *Lesbia*) did you love *Philocrates*? Did he love you? Ha! Did I love him? return'd *Fraudeliſa*; never was any Paſſion founded upon more Eſteem or Inclinatio

How modeſt, and reſpectful, was he! what charming, ſoft, what paſſionate things he ſaid to me! he'll die with Grief (unhappy Man) as well as I. Why then (reply'd *Lesbia*) loving him ſo much as you do, and being ſo well belov'd by him, do you entertain a Commerce of Galantry with *Philabel?* 'Tis a long Story my Dear (anſwer'd *Fraudeliſa*) which I am not in a Condition to tell you. The Widow repreſented to her, that the thing was not ſo deſperate as ſhe imagin'd; that if they knew her Story, they might give her ſome profitable Counſel; that we are blind in our own Concerns, and more capable of adviſing others than our ſelves: ſhe added, that ſince ſhe was belov'd by *Philocrates*, and did really love him, ſhe hop'd to find ſome means to juſtifie her in his Thoughts, and to reconcile them together. This Diſcourſe a little ſettled *Fraudeliſa*, and made her begin her Relation thus.

THE HISTORY OF *FRAUDELISA.*

AFter my Father and Mother had remov'd me from the Convent in which you and I were, they took me home to them, and gave me a Governeſs; but in a little time it happen'd, that a great Law-Suit in which they conteſted for the beſt part of their Eſtate, was referr'd to the Parliament of *Burgundy*; thither they went, and left me with my Governeſs, under the Conduct of an Aunt, who dy'd preſently after their Departure; ſo that my Governeſs had the ſole Management of me. This Woman, inſtead of examining my Actions, to regulate them, applauded me in all, and was eternally commending me, telling me, I was the fineſt young Lady in *Paris*, and ſhou'd cer-

tainly make a World of Conqueſts: this is very taking with young People, and it gain'd her a great Aſcendant over me, which was all her Aim, as you will ſee hereafter.

One day ſeeing me more gay, and more exact than ordinary in dreſſing my ſelf, ſhe took her time to tell me, that if my Beauty gave me Pleaſure, it as much tormented a very fine Gentleman, who lov'd me with a moſt violent Paſſion; but ſo ſubmiſſive, and reſpectfull, that a Queen wou'd not be offended at it. I ask'd her his Name, but ſhe conceal'd it; telling me, ſhe wou'd let me gueſs who he was. Upon the Walks the ſame day, I ſaw a Man who never took his Eyes off me, but look'd on me with a paſſionate Air, and ſometimes our Eyes met. Ah, my Dear, what Deceivers Men are in theſe Moments of Surpriſe, he caſt down his Eyes in a manner ſo ſubmiſs, and ſo full of Modeſty, that I would have given him for a Pattern to the moſt expert Novice in our Convent: Ah Cheat! Ah Traytor! 'twas only to enſnare me. Do you underſtand that 'twas *Philabel* of whom I ſpeak? by the Sequel you will ſee how much my Governeſs was at his Diſpoſal: She ask'd me after our walk, if I had found out my Lover; and I thought I had made a fine

Diſcovery, when in deſcribing him, ſhe told me 'twas the ſame ſhe had ſpoke of. He was a man according to her Character, that had not his equal for Nobleneſs, for Courage, and for Merit; truly 'twas an Honour for me, that he wou'd make me a Viſit. How ridiculous one is when one does not know the World! I receiv'd him very well, and was proud of my Conqueſt. He gave me a pretty little Dog, and a young Parrot, that ſpoke every thing: I paſs'd the days in kiſſing and careſſing the little Dog, the Parrot talk'd all night, and twenty times repeated, Ingrateful *Frandeliſa*, pity me; cruel *Frandeliſa*, pity the unhappy *Philabel*. He carry'd me to two Plays, to *Ariana* and *Andromache*. At *Ariana*, he wou'd willingly have fought with *Theſeus*, to puniſh him for his fidelity. At *Andromache*, in certain paſſionate and tender parts where *Pyrrhus* is ill us'd by her, preſſing my Hand with Tears in his Eyes, he ſaid to me, that he was a thouſand times more unhappy than *Pyrrhus*, that *Andromache* had a Cauſe to hate *Pyrrhus* ſince he had been an Enemy to *Hector* her Husband; but that I hated him without having any reaſon for it. I laugh'd at this Diſcourſe, as who wou'd not have done in my place.

The next day I did not see him, he was sick; every day his Distemper encreas'd he wou'd take no more Nourishment, or Remedies and was resolv'd to die, as they told me. My charitable Governess undertook to make me sensible that I had committed a great Fault; and that with some Men of a tender Nature, there needed not so much to be their Deaths. Immediately with Pen in hand, I make him Satisfaction; I write two or three times to him, or rather I send in my hand Copies of Letters which my illustrious Governess composed. I was in good earnest, and imagin'd 'twas to save the life of a Man whom I believ'd I had some Obligations to: the Letter spoke of nothing but the violent Passion I had for him, the eager Desire I had to give him some Marks of it, and to do all things rather than see him any longer sick. Was not I a very discreet Girl? Was not I finely governanted? But you will judge better of it by the rest. The sick Man wou'd not mend, nor leave his Bed; but I must go to raise him; which I did, tho' with Reluctancy: I had no particular Inclination for his Person; he did not touch my Heart, the sight of him gave me neither Pleasure, nor Pain; his Study-ed, and affected behaviour did not please me; in fine, I lik'd nothing of him but

his Parrot and his little Dog. We found him in his Bed, decay'd and weak. They begun with telling us, that he had eat nothing in three days; then out of reſpect, as if I had been an able Phyſician, my Governeſs, and thoſe who were in the Chamber with him, retir'd to another, and left me alone with my Patient, to talk with him in private of the State of his Sickneſs. The firſt thing he ſaid to me was that he was reſolv'd to die; that ſince I wou'd not love him, Life was but a burthen to him, and that he wiſh'd for nothing ſo much as to leave it. I confeſs to you, that I believ'd he ſpoke ſincerely, and that I pity'd him; I called him back to life in the beſt manner I cou'd, and promis'd him, whatever he wou'd have, if he wou'd be careful of his Health, and eat ſomething before me. Admire my Friend at my Simplicity; he eats part of a Chicken; I applaud my ſelf for this great Cure, he gives me a thouſand Thanks, and kiſſes my Arms a thouſand times; which I took no care to hinder, for fear of a Relapſe; my ſottiſh Complaiſance emboldned him. Ah inſolence! Yes, againſt this ſick, againſt this weak Man, I had occaſion for my Teeth, my Nails, and all my Strength. Eſcap'd out of his hands, I made him a thouſand out-

rageous Reproaches, charging him never to come any more into my Preſence; then I call'd my Governeſs, who was very calmly in another Chamber; and went out of the Houſe with her, more furious than a Lyon: What, ſaid I to her, is *Philabel* then but an impudent Cheat, a Villain, that has neither Tenderneſs nor Reſpect for me, and who deſires nothing but to triumph over my Weakneſs and my Honour! had not I been a pretty Creature, added I, if I had defended my ſelf worſe? durſt I ever have appear'd in the World? and many other things I ſaid, too long to recite. All the time of this Diſcourſe my good Governeſs hearkned very patiently to me; and ſeeing me a little calmer ſhe ſaid I ſhou'd not alarm my ſelf, and that a leſs Beauty wou'd not have produc'd ſuch great effects; that ſhe knew very underſtanding Women to whom the ſame thing had happen'd, who never made any Noiſe of it; and that, tho' they had pretended an Anger and Reſentment againſt the Men, they eſteem'd them the more for it in their Hearts; that I ought to do the ſame, that the like Adventure had befallen to other Maids of Quality beſides me, who had not come off as I did, and yet they were not leſs eſteem'd in the World.

By this Diſcourſe I preceiv'd all the wicked Deſigns ſhe had againſt me, and her Intelligence with *Philabel* to ruine me: What Fury, what Indignation, did I conceive againſt her! notwithſtanding which, I muſt diſſemble, or loſe all.

As ſoon as I came home to my Lodging, I ſhut my ſelf up alone in my Chamber, where reflecting upon the Softneſs, and tranquility of my Life, whilſt I was in the Convent; upon the Agitations and Diſquiets, I had felt ſince I came out of it; the Deceits and Infidelities I had met with; the ſmall Duration of the Pleaſures of this World; the Shortneſs of Life, my Aunt's ſudden Death, and upon a thouſand other ſuch things, I took the Reſolution of leaving the World, and becoming Religious, and I only waited for the Return of my Father and Mother, to put it in execution. Mean while I liv'd in this manner, the days I paſs'd entirely in reading the Lives of *Anchorets*, and Fathers of the Deſart: charm'd with what I read, and in a ſtrong Deſire to imitate them, I had renounced all ſorts of Ornaments: I never went out, but to Church; I had no Attach for any of the things of the World, and I taſted no other Pleaſures but what my little Dog and Parrot gave me, nay even thoſe I began to ſcruple, when I conſi-

der'd

der'd from what hand I had them, and re-ſolv'd to ſend them back to *Philabel*, which I did. How my little Heart murmur'd and ſuffer'd when I ſaw them carry'd away! I fanſy'd there was Sadneſs in the Eyes of the two poor little Animals as they left me; and I needed all my Reaſon, not to be overcome with Tenderneſs. The Perſon who carry'd them had not been gone a quarter of an Hour, when I ſaw *Philabel* enter my Chamber, and throw himſelf at my Feet, with a Complexion pale and wan, his Eyes bathed in Tears, Deſpair painted on his Face, and in a Condition ſo moving, and ſo pierc'd with Grief, that no Heart cou'd be hard enough to ſee him in it, without Emotion. He ſaid he was a perfidious Villain, a Brute, unworthy to appear before me; that he came to beg my Pardon, and to waſh off with his Blood the Injury and Offence he had done me. In that moment he drew his Sword, and was going to plunge it in his Breaſt, if I had not withheld him: in fine, I muſt or pardon him, or ſee him die. I did it; becauſe, ſaid I, to forgive Injuries is a great Virtue: and as a Mark that I forgave entirely, I was conſtrained to retake the little Dog and Parrot; which was without much Violence, you may imagine. I let him know my Reſolution of

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leaving the World, and becoming Religious; I incited him to imitate me: he did what he cou'd to put me off my Design; but finding me fix'd, he told me he would take the ſame, ſince without me the World would be burthenſome and inſupportable to him. In fine, we parted with moving Adieus on both ſides; I made him give me a Promiſe not to viſit me any more, ſince his Preſence was an Enemy to my Intentions; and he drew another from me, that in caſe I chang'd my Reſolution, and remain'd in the World, I wou'd love no other than he, and be only his. My Reſolution of being Religious appear'd to me ſo ſtrong, that I believ'd I hazarded nothing by that Promiſe; but you will ſee by the Sequel, that this Day's Miſfortune is occaſion'd by that imprudent Word.

I continu'd then to live in the manner I deſcrib'd to you before, not ſtirring out, ſeeing no body, always alone, never dreſſing my ſelf, ſolely employ'd in Reading, Meditating, and Praying in my Chamber, which I had ſo order'd, that it look'd like a Hermit's Cell. One day when I was in it, at my uſual Occupation, my Mother who arriv'd from *Dijon*, with a Gentleman who led her, ſurpriz'd me there. What Aſtoniſhment was there on both

ſides! in me, for being found thus by her and that Man, at a time when I little expected her; and in her, to ſee me in that Condition: the poor Woman was ſenſibly touch'd with it; her firſt Thought was, that my Aunt's Death had produc'd that effect: ſhe threw her Arms about my neck, and embrac'd me tenderly, without being able to ſpeak; and I burſt into Tears, ſcarce able to breath. After theſe firſt Movements, recollecting my ſelf, I fell down at her feet, and embracing her knees, begg'd her Permiſſion to go into a Convent, and become Religious. She has no Child but I, ſhe loves me extreamly, judge of her Sentiments. She did not declare her ſelf, and without ſhewing any Repugnance to my Deſigns, ſhe rais'd me up, and keeping me in her Arms, ſhe told me, that ſhe wou'd not oppoſe my Reſolution, if 'twas inſpir'd by Heaven; but that we muſt firſt be ſure of that, and not follow every ſudden Motion; that ſometimes our Youth, our Inconſtancy, or ſome ſhort-liv'd Diſlike of the World, had the greateſt ſhare in them; but that thoſe ſort of Engagements were of extraordinary conſequence, being for our whole Lives, and therefore ſhould be well conſider'd. She added, that I was yet too young to have a juſt Diſcernment of the World, or of

Religion; that there was no haſte; that I ſhou'd dreſs my ſelf as became a Maid of my Age and Quality, and not make my ſelf remarkable by ſuch Singularity; that if hereafter I continu'd in the ſame Thoughts, ſhe wou'd conſent to their Execution, with all the Facility ſhe cou'd: ſhe preſented that Perſon who came with her to me, telling me, he was our Family's beſt Friend, and very capable of giving me good Advice; then ſhe retir'd with him, and left me alone in my Chamber, where I made many Reflections upon all that had befall'n, and all that had been ſaid to me.

But, my dear *Lesbia*, I muſt make an end; I find I ſhall let my ſelf go to a Recital, that will not leave me in a Capacity of profiting by thoſe Advices which I expect from your Freindſhip. In fine, the Perſon whom my Mother gave me for a Counſellor, was *Philocrates*. 'Twas againſt his Father that we pleaded; the Proceſs had already coſt above a hundred thouſand Crowns; it concern'd the Legitimacy of my Grandfather, and of two Succeſſions of my Unkles, which is to ſay, that this Proceſs wou'd have ruin'd us, and never have been ended; By good fortune it was in the hands of one of the ableſt and moſt diſintereſted Counſellors of that Parliament;

ment; this Judge conferr'd about it with both Parties, made them ſenſible that neither their Fortunes nor Lives, cou'd terminate it; and by a Goodneſs which is not common to Judges, who will only judge, he wou'd inform himſelf of the State of the Families, of the two Antagoniſts; and underſtanding that *Philocrates*'s Father, one of the Parties, had no Son nor Heir but him, and that my Father, the other Party, had only one Daughter and Heireſs, and that our Age and Qualities were ſuitable, he propos'd (to put an end to the whole Difference) a Marriage betwixt *Philocrates* and me, which was agreed to: ſo that having made himſelf abſolute Maſter of the Buſineſs, inſtead of an Arreſt, he gave us Articles of Marriage, containing a Tranſaction and Donation, to our Advantage, of all that had been conteſted for, which was ſign'd with Satisfaction on all ſides. In fine, the Parties reconcil'd came to *Paris*, to conclude the Marriage, at that time when my Mother and *Philocrates* ſurpriz'd me, as I have told you; but they did not think it fit to tell me this News till my Mind was in another Diſpoſition. *Philocrates* came often to ſee me in my Chamber; at firſt I look'd upon him as a Friend to our Family, and one my Mother had given me for a Counſellor.

Ha *Lesbia*! how hard is it not to follow the Counsels of a Man made like *Philocrates*, when they have such an aim as his had! I know not if you ever saw him; he is the handsomest, and most agreeable Man in *Paris*; an air of Quality open and sincere; all his Behaviour Great, Genteel, and Charming; a delicate and engaging Wit; a Heart tender, passionate, and equally capable of receiving great Passions, as of giving them: I found it by Experience afterwards; my Heart and Mind was fill'd with nothing but him, I slept not Night nor Day, and employ'd my self wholly in endeavouring to discover his Sentiments for me: If he miss'd seeing me one Day, or came later, or went away sooner than usual, it gave me some Alarms. I persisted still in my Religious Designs, not so much out of a distaste for the World, as for the improbability I thought there was of my ever being *Philocrates*'s. I was utterly ignorant of his Sentiments, at certain times I fansy'd he had a disposition to wish me well; at others, that he laugh'd at my Weaknesses and me; at others, that as a Friend to the Family he only serv'd my Mother, and endeavour'd to bring me to her Desires. One Day that he was more pensive than usual, and that I quarrel'd at him for it,

he discover'd to me what I so much wish'd to know; and holding one of my Hands press'd in his, with a more tender and more passionate transport than ordinary, he confess'd to me, that I was engag'd to him by Articles of Marriage: He beg'd my pardon for having done it without my consent, and for having conceal'd it from me, told me, in what manner things were agreed on; and how by that our process had been finish'd; then he swore to me, that never Man had lov'd so well as he lov'd me; that I shou'd be always Mistress of his Destiny; that he had no design to force my Inclinations; and that he preferr'd the happiness of pleasing me before that of being my Husband. Never Daughter was more resign'd to her Parents Will, than I appear'd; I told him, that I was not sorry that Heaven had made choice of me to be an Instrument of finishing a Process so pernicious to both our Families, and that I would never bring any obstacle to it. Ha! *Lesbia*, what obliging reproaches did he make me in that Moment! he said, I had only Sentiments of esteem and acknowledgment for him; I was not touch'd with his Passion; I acted but by Consideration; and in fine, after the manner with which he lov'd me, if my Heart

did

did not change, he ſhou'd not become the more happy by marrying me. This Converſation was interrupted by my Mother, who came into my Room, and found us both much diſcompos'd. *Philocrates* retir'd out of reſpect, and left us together: Then I gave my Mother an account of our Diſcourſe, and what *Philocrates* had told me, which ſhe confirm'd, and let me know, that if I deſir'd to pleaſe her, I ſhou'd not deferr marrying him. I expreſs'd a great deal of reſpect and ſubmiſſion to her Will, upon which ſhe went away very well ſatisfied, and left me alone in my Chamber. 'Tis here, my deareſt *Lesbia*, that I am not able to expreſs the condition in which I found my ſelf that moment: I form'd Idea's of imaginary Pleaſures, repreſenting to my ſelf the advantage of putting an end to ſuch a Proceſs; the Glory and the happineſs of being *Philocrates*'s Wife, his Generoſity in reſigning all other Claims, and deſiring only to obtain me from my ſelf; his Submiſſion in making me abſolute Miſtriſs of his Deſtinies; the *delicateneſs* of his Sentiments, in wiſhing rather to be lov'd by me, than to become my Husband. Yes, yes, it is impoſſible to conceive the tranſports of Joy and Satisfaction which I felt; but Heaven always ſells us very dear the Pleaſures of this World,

and above all to me, who am the moſt unhappy Maid alive, as you are going to ſee. At that very time, *Philabel*, who had heard of *Philocrates*'s *Attachment* for me, and that he was upon the point of marrying me, guided by Fury and Deſpair, writ me a Letter, by which he beg'd me to remember, the Promiſe I had made him of never being any other Man's but his; and threaten'd, if I did not, to ſhew my Letters to *Philocrates*, to publiſh them in the World, and to ruine my Reputation; not thinking himſelf oblig'd to obſerve any Fidelity to a Perſon who had firſt broke her Faith with him. Ha! what a fall from Happineſs at the reading of this Letter! what Sadneſs! what Diſquiets! what ſhou'd I do; I fanſy'd I already ſaw my Letters running through the World, and in the hands of *Philocrates*. How ſhou'd I prevent ſo fatal a Blow, to whom ſhou'd I have recourſe? I found there was a neceſſity of addreſſing my ſelf to my Governeſs, by reaſon of the intimacy that was betwixt her and *Philabel*: You have committed (ſaid ſhe to me) a very great fault in promiſing *Philabel*, not to marry any Man but him; and to juſtifie your ſelf, you muſt pretend to him, that you love him, that you have no affection for *Philocrates*, that you

only marry him in obedience to the Commands of a ſevere Father, and that you ſhall not be the leſs his. I did ſo by the Letter that I writ to Day, which is fall'n into the hands of *Philocrates*, and which renders me the moſt unhappy Perſon in the World unleſs you take pity of me, and aſſiſt me with your Counſels.

Fraudeliſa having ceas'd to ſpeak, the Widow reaſſur'd her, and told her, 'twou'd not be ſo difficult as ſhe imagin'd, for her to bring her ſelf off; that ſhe muſt arm her ſelf with Reſolution, and confidently affirm to *Philocrates*, that ſhe was never capable of writing ſuch Letters. How can I do that, (reply'd *Fraudeliſa*) ſince he knows my Hand, and has many of my Letters, which it will be eaſie for him to confront with this laſt, and to confute me? The Widow pray'd her to follow her Fancy, and let her ſelf be guided; and ask'd her, if ſhe had ever a Copy of the ſame Letter, ſhe told her ſhe had, and preſently took it out of her Cabinet, then the Woman made her write it over upon juſt ſuch Paper as that which ſhe had ſent, with the ſame Pen, and the ſame Ink: The Letter finiſh'd, ſhe told *Fraudeliſa*, that ſhe wou'd have it imitated by a Man, who was ſo admirable at Counterfeiting Hands, that there was

none but thoſe who were very skilful, that wou'd not be deceiv'd: After which it wou'd not be difficult to impoſe upon *Philocrates*, if ſhe play'd her part with the leaſt addreſs; that when he came to reproach her with her Infidelity, and for a proof againſt her, ſhou'd ſhow her the true Letter, ſhe muſt be ſure to take it, and under pretence of going to the Window to examine the Character by the full Light, turn her ſelf dexterouſly on one ſide, and when he could not ſee her Hands, ſlip the true Letter into her Pocket, and ſubſtitute the Counterfeit in its place; then return to *Philocrates*, give him the Counterfeit, firmly maintaining, that ſhe did not write the Letter, and expreſs a great deal of Anger and Indignation at this procedure. This Widow added, that if there ſtill remain'd ſome Doubts and Suſpicions in *Philocrates*, he wou'd undoubtedly conferr upon it with ſome that were expert in thoſe things, who wou'd aſſure him that the Letter was falſe, and not hers, that then he cou'd think no otherwiſe, than that it was a Trick of *Philabel*'s to hinder him from marrying her; and that if *Philabel* ſhou'd afterwards ſhow her other Letters, they wou'd by this become ſuſpected to *Philocrates*, and oblige him to

haſten his Marriage, to come and beg her Pardon, make her a Confidence of all that had paſt, and render his firſt Eſteem and Tenderneſs.

This Widow had no ſooner made an end, than *Fraudeliſa*, apprehending with pleaſure the Deſign, and reliſhing her Counſel, gave her a thouſand Thanks, and promis'd to make her a Preſent.

Lesbia who was no leſs embarraſs'd than *Fraudeliſa*, being pleas'd with the Widow's Advice, was very deſirous to make uſe of it in her turn; and after having told her, that ſhe was engag'd in a more troubleſome Affair than *Fraudeliſa's*, ſhe intreated her aſſiſtance in adviſing her, and then inform'd her, that ſhe was belov'd by *Alcander*, that he had promis'd to marry her, that ſhe had a Contract writ, and ſign'd with his Blood, that now he refus'd to perform it; that out of reſentment againſt him, ſhe had reſolv'd to abandon him, to take with her Two thouſand *Louis d' Or's*, to repair, in part, the Injury his breach of Promiſe had done her, and to go with *Cleanthes*, who had lov'd her a long time, and wou'd marry her; that ſhe had preſented him with a Ruby which *Alcander* had given her; that to hinder *Alcander* from ſuſpecting any thing, and to perſwade him

that it had drop'd from the Ring, and was loſt, ſhe had given *Cleanthus* only the Ruby, and had kept the Ring, but that unhappily *Alcander* had been inform'd of part of what had paſs'd; and that her concern was to know, how ſhe ſhou'd efface all thoſe ill impreſſions which he had taken of her Conduct, and regain his Confidence and his Heart. Our Widow repreſented to her, that what ſhe had told them was not circumſtantial enough, and that ſhe muſt give her a more particular relation of all that had paſt, if ſhe expected any benefit by her Advice; to which *Frandeliſa* added, that after the ſincere manner with which ſhe had related her Life, *Lesbia* could have no reaſon to conceal any thing from them; which engag'd her to ſpeak in this manner.

The End of the Third Part.

THE FOURTH PART.

The History of LESBIA.

MY Father had ſpent all his Eſtate, and part of my Mother's Jointure, in the King's Service, and juſt when he expected a recompence from the Court, was unhappily kill'd at the Battle of *Senef*. My Mother, for the management of her Fortune, retir'd into a Religious Houſe, to live there without Expence, upon a moderate Penſion, and put me into that Convent, where our Acquaintance firſt began. 'Twas there, if ever, I taſted any ſweetneſs in Life; the Religious who had the charge of our Education, took a particular Inclination for me, and had no greater pleaſure than having me ſhut up in her Chamber, to give me Inſtructions, which her Heart dictated as much as her Wit. 'Twas to advertiſe me, (as if by a kind of Prophetick Knowledge of what

was to befal me) that Men were deceitful, and unfaithful Creatures, in whom I ought not to confide; that if I were Discreet and Vertuous, Providence wou'd regard my Prayers, and take me into his Protection; that I shou'd be very careful not to fall into any Irregularity; and in case I shou'd be so unhappy, she made me understand, that I ought to come out of it with all diligence, if I would not draw upon my self the scorn of the World, and the Wrath of Heaven. I recite admirable Instructions to you, my dear *Fraudeliſa*, but you will see hereafter how much I needed them. The tranquility and repose which my Mother and I enjoy'd was interrupted by a cruel Misfortune which oblig'd us to leave our Solitude: 'twas to go and solicit a Process before the Parliament at *Rouen*, in which all we had in the World was at stake. At our Arrival in that City, we made an Acquaintance with an old Gentleman nam'd *Cleon*, who was esteem'd of worth and quality. That which at first surpriz'd us, was the Passion and Zeal with which he acted in our Affair; but when we learn'd that our Adversary had just gain'd a Suit at Law against him, we judg'd that Revenge had at least as great a share in what he did for us, as his concern for our Interests: what-

ever it was, we receiv'd great Services by it.

One Day as we were very Gay, and every Body flatter'd us with a happy Succeſs in our Affairs, *Cleon* brought his Nephew *Cleanthus* to ſee us, out of pure Civility, as he told us: Ah! what paſs'd in my Heart at that firſt ſight! and what in that of *Cleanthus*! we bluſh'd, grew pale, and were ſo mov'd, and ſo out of our ſelves, that 'twas not poſſible for us to ſpeak a word to one another. There are Hearts made for each other. The Vanity, Impudence, and Artifice of Men, their mean endeavours to pleaſe, to appear Beauiſh, Agreeable and Witty; their Debaucheries, and the Documents of my Religious, had given me ſuch a diſguſt for them, that I cou'd not endure them: But I was not the ſame for *Cleanthus*: I found none of thoſe faults in him; he appear'd to me Humble, Modeſt, Sincere, his Wit natural, and without affectation; in fine, I obſerv'd as much Prudence and Vertue in all his Actions, as I ſaw Licentiouſneſs and Irregularity in thoſe of others. But admire this Conformity of Inclinations: *Cleanthus* cou'd not endure Women, for the ſame Reaſons, and the ſame Faults that I hated Men; which made us conceive a violent Affection for one another. It was not oppos'd either by his

Uncle, who look'd upon him as his only Heir, or by my Mother, their Design being to marry us together, after we had gain'd our Process. Ah, that unlucky Process which we look'd upon as gain'd, this was its Destiny. Our Adversary brought in a Paper very late the Night before the Tryal; I think our Attorney call'd that a new Production: and the next Morning early it was try'd, and we cast, by that curst Paper deliver'd in the Evening; and what was yet more severe upon us, was, that my Mother was condemn'd to pay all the Charges, which amounted to a considerable Sum.

You may imagine how sensibly my Mother and I resented this Loss, if you remember that 'twas our whole Fortune we contended for. That which augmented my Grief, was, the unhappy State in which I fansy'd I shou'd see *Cleanthus*; yes, he alone concern'd me more than all the rest together; and I thought of nothing but consoling him. But I did not yet know all my Misfortunes, I saw *Cleanthus* no more: I sent often to his Lodgings, and my Mother to *Cleon*'s; but the Doors were so well kept, that we endeavour'd in vain to get in; so that we could not see them. My Mother began to mistrust *Cleon*; our Cause thus lost which he had warranted

the Gain of, and his Care to ſhun us, were her Reaſons. At firſt I juſtify'd them both to her, prepoſſeſs'd with a Belief that there was ſome Miſunderſtanding: but after having a long time flatter'd my ſelf, I concluded that *Cleanthus* had only lov'd me for his Intereſt, and that the Loſs of our Proceſs, which left me without Fortune, was the Cauſe of his Behaviour and his Change. I conceiv'd at that time ſo great a Diſdain and Indignation againſt *Cleanthus*, that I took a Reſolution, not only of never ſeeing him in my Life, but ever not to ſtay any longer in a City where there was ſo great a Villain. I propos'd to my Mother to leave *Rouen*, and go to *Paris*, to get Counſel: ſhe conſented to it, and we ſet out in our Coach, our Minds fill'd with all that had befall'n us, and in a profound Chagrin.

We had ſcarce rid an hour or two, when a Stag of prodigious Greatneſs coming out of a Caſtle, met our Horſes, who growing wild and unruly, taking the Bit in their Teeth, without keeping the Road, they run into the middle of the Country, over-turn'd the Coach, and drew us ſo for ſome time. By good fortune, the Lady of the Caſtle, who came out of it, ſeeing our Miſchance came to our Relief, with many of her Servants, and brought us out

of that Danger. She found my Mother wounded in many places in her Head; for me, I was in a Swoon, and there was only some Scratches with Bryars and Thorns upon my Neck and my Arms. They put my Mother in one Chamber, and me in another; and I being still in a Swoon, they undrest me, and put me to Bed. They sent the Footmen all about to fetch Doctors and Chirurgeons, and left me one moment alone in the Chamber. In that same instant the Lady of the Castle's Son, who return'd from Hunting, and who had not heard of our Accident, came into the Chamber where I was laid, and found me in that Condition. After he was recover'd from his first Surprize, he took me by the Hand, and felt my Pulse. Just then I wak'd out of my Swoon; imagine what an Amazement and Fright I was in, to see my Neck and Arms nak'd, and one of my Hands in that of a Young-Man, whom I had never seen before; and to find my self in a Bed, and a Chamber, which I did not know; I who thought my self in a coach. I confess, I doubted for some time whether I was awake, or if it was a Dream; but at last coming to my self, I took my Hand from him who held it, and cover'd my self all over with the Bed-cloaths. The Gentleman was as much amaz'd as I, till his

Mother coming into the Chamber, clear'd the matter, and inform'd us how we happened to find our ſelves in that manner. This Man was *Alcander*; who begun from that time to love me, and to perſecute me with a Paſſion, which renders me the moſt unhappy Wretch alive. My Mother and I being perfectly recover'd, we thank'd our Benefactors, took Leave of them, and purſu'd the Road to *Paris*. We had not travell'd a League, when we ſaw *Alcander* Galloping towards us; 'twas to proffer us, by his Mother's order, an Apartment in a great Houſe which ſhe had at *Paris*. We accepted his Offer, he came into our Coach, ſent back his Horſes, and conducted us. I never ſaw a Man more Solicitous to pleaſe; he turn'd his Wit to a pretty Pleaſantry; had little Stories upon all Occaſions; and Songs, with a Voice ſweet and clear; he talk'd of nothing but the Tenderneſs of his Heart, and the *Delicateneſs* of his Senſiments: In fine, I preceiv'd he had a mind to make himſelf be lov'd; *a d'autre a d'autre*, ſaid I to my ſelf; *Cleanthus* has taught me too well what Men are, ever to look upon them again but with Diſdain.

The Journey ended without any further Explication; *Alcander* lodg'd us in magnificent Apartments; I had a Chamber adorn'd

adorn'd with curious Italian Pictures; he left us at reſt for ſome time, and we ſaw him very rarely. Shortly after, we learn'd that our Antagoniſts had rated the Expences, and bragg'd that they wou'd ſeize our Goods and impriſon my Mother; which made us paſs our Nights and Days in imploring the Juſtice of Heaven, and in Tears. But I was more firm and reſolute than my Mother; I ſaid to her that Providence was juſt; that we had never by our Actions deſerv'd, Shame, or Infamy, and that having Recourſe to, and Relying upon his Goodneſs, he won'd not abandon us, but would bring us out of this unhappy State, and upon the Faith I had in what my *Relegieuſe* had ſaid to me, I ſpoke with ſo much aſſurance, and ſo perſwaſively, that I comforted my Mother, and made her leave her Melancholy and her Fears. One day (judge of my ſurprize) being alone in my Chamber, I ſaw *Alcander* come in, who throwing himſelf at my feet with Tears in his Eyes, conjur'd me to pity the unhappy Condition to which I had reduc'd him; and told me, that after the Death of his Wife he had made a Reſolution never to marry again; that it cou'd not maintain it ſelf againſt me, ſo amiable I appear'd to him; and that in fine he muſt either ſee me his wife, or I

must see his Death. I confess to you, that I had some Joy at this News; not so much for *Alcander*'s Quality, and Fortune, as because that *Cleanthus* hearing of this Marriage, would conceive the greater value for me, reproach himself with his Ingratitude, and be griev'd for having lost me. However, I referr'd *Alcander* to my Mother, without giving him any Answer. He spoke to her of it; she wou'd have his Mother's Consent: he told her, that she intended to have him marry a Daughter of one of her Friends, which wou'd make her against it; that by temporizing he might gain her Consent, or she might die, being very old, and always Sick. My Mother, who at the expence of her Life wou'd have marry'd me advantageously, entertain'd his Proposals, and insinuated to me, that considering my Circumstances, I ought not to lose that Occasion. I follow'd her Counsel, hearkning calmly to whatever he wou'd say to me; in conclusion, his Intention was to marry me secretly: we cou'd not get a Priest who wou'd do it; he told me that the Consent of the Persons only made a Marriage; he gave me a promise of marrying me sign'd with his Blood, brought me to the foot of the Altar, swore that he took me for his Wife; I made the Vow on my side too: Behold him the happiest of Mortals; but his happiness

was interrupted when he offer'd to make uſe of the Privilege of Husbands; I repuls'd him, us'd him ill, was enrag'd at him; Quarrels between us, Reconcilements: Reaſons on his part to eſtabliſh his right of Husband, and to put himſelf in poſſeſſion of it; Inflexibility on mine: Tears, Deſpair, refuſing to Eat, reſolving to Die; that was what I had my mind fatigue'd, and my ears ſtun'd with, at every Moment; however, I perſiſted ſtill, in reſolving firſt to have all the forms. At this time my Mother's Antagoniſt had made a Command be giv'n her, of paying the Charges: the next Day, for want of Money, ſhe was to be put in Priſon, and her Goods ſeiz'd. It ſeem'd to me, that this News did not touch *Alcander* enough: I complain'd of it to him; he made me Anſwer, that if I wou'd own him for my Husband, and live with him as a Wife, he ſhou'd have the Sentiments of a Son-in-law for my Mother, wou'd acknowledge her in that Quality, and find out the means to aſſiſt her in her Buſineſs; that I ſhou'd conſult my ſelf upon it; that he ſhou'd ſee on this Occaſion if I had any Nature, that he wou'd return in a little time to receive my Anſwer, and went away thus. Ha! when I ſaw my ſelf in this deſperate Condition, how many different Thoughts had I, how many ſeve-

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ral Movements did I feel! on one hand I repreſented to my ſelf my Mother ſhamefully dragg'd into Priſon, and all her Goods ſeiz'd by my permiſſion, and with my Conſent; on the other hand, I ſaw that our intended Marriage cou'd not juſtifie my yielding to *Alcander*, what he ask'd, and that if I did, I ſhou'd loſe all I had of moſt valuable, and fall into an Abyſs of Miſery and Infamy. I call'd to mind then how often I had heard my *Religieuſe* ſay, That Heaven is acknowledging of what is done for him; that he does not refuſe a diſcreet and vertuous Maid what ſhe Implores of him; and, that he takes her under his Protection; which comforted me, and determin'd me to confide in that. On another ſide, the Refuſal which that Providence had made me of the gaining our Proceſs ſo juſt and ſo reaſonable, and which I had beg'd with ſuch ardent Prayers, with the unhappy Condition in which we were, and which I thought we had ſo little merited, gave me a Diſtruſt of that ſame Providence; ſo that I wou'd not abandon my ſelf intirely to his happy Care. In this reſtleſs and unhappy State, I caſt my eyes upon ſome of the Pictures in my Chamber a fatal Curioſity mov'd me to draw a Curtain which hid one of them, 'twas a naked Piece, repreſenting *Venus*, in the

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Arms of *Mars*, and their ſporting at the time when *Vulcan* made them be ſurpriz'd by the Gods. What Charms! what Pleaſures! what Beauties! ſtruck my Sight! I did not look upon them as Pictures; they gave me the ſame Movements that real and ſubſtantial Beauties wou'd have done. In that inſtant I felt an Emotion, my heart ſigh'd with it, a Languiſhment run through all my Veins, it ſhook me with a ſoft horror, which till then was unknown to me: Ha *Fraudeliſa*! how unhappy are our Sex, not to be able to defend themſelves at certain moments, from thoſe ſort of Weakneſſes! Unfortunately, in that fatal Moment, *Alcander* came into my Chamber, to know my Reſolution: he perceiv'd the Condition in which I was; he interpreted it to his Advantage; he made uſe of it, and preſt me with ſo much Eagerneſs and Spirit, that I loſt all Knowledge, and knew no longer what I did. I only remember that my Reaſon rais'd in my heart Motions of Indignation and Anger againſt *Alcander*; that afterwards the ſame Reaſon, ſurpriz'd and inchanted by my Senſes, and in Conſpiracy with them, to deceive me, repreſented to me, that I ſav'd a Mother from Priſon, and that by it I engag'd a Husband to my ſelf. In this unlucky, in this fatal minute, *Cleon*, who ar-

arriv'd from *Rouen*, and was come to visit my Mother and me, finding a Key in the Lock of the Chamber where I was, with *Alcander*, open'd the Door without knocking, and enter'd suddenly: he was so terribly struck to see me in that manner, that he got out hastily, shut the door again, and went away: Ha! what did I not feel when I came to think, that *Cleanthus* hearing of my Conduct, wou'd applaud himself for having abandon'd me! No, I shou'd never have comforted my self, without the Thought that he wou'd afterwards know of my Marriage with *Alcander*. To solace my *Chagrin*, and the more to assure my self of him, I caress'd him, I call'd him twenty times, my dear Husband, my dear Heart, and begg'd him to think of his Mother-in-law, and to bring her out of this troublesome Business. *Alcander* was no more so sensible of my Caresses, he appear'd to me cold and indolent, and said, that a *Minor*, as he was, cou'd not command Money; that my Mother had nothing to do, but to make a Sale of her Goods, and to retire into a Convent. At this Discourse I was much afflicted, I wept and I complain'd of him; he went abruptly out of my Chamber, and left me; I run after him; he flies before me. Just then a Footman came and stopp'd me, to give

me a Letter which I knew to be from *Cleanthus*; it imported, that he was at the heighth of Felicity, since he was shortly to be my Husband; that *Cleon* his Unkle was gone for *Paris*, to carry my Mother the Money to pay the Charges to which she had been condemn'd, and with a Design to bring me with her to *Rouen*, to conclude our Marriage; that the Reason why he had not seen us before our Departure, as to his particular, was because that the News of the Loss of our Cause had touch'd him in such a manner, that he fell sick upon it; that he had lost all Knowledge, and that the Physicians had charg'd his Servants not to let any body see him: and as for his Unkle's part, that animated by the Concern he took in our Interests, he had secretly taken Post for *Calais*, where he had been to seek for a Paper that wou'd prove the Falseness of that which had occasion'd the Loss of our Suit; that he had brought it; and that it wou'd be no Difficulty to recall the Sentence which had been given against us, and to regain our Process. This poor Man, tho' he was not quite recover'd, did all he cou'd in his Letter to let me see how well he lov'd me, and how impatient he was to make me his.

Ha, with what a cruel Blow this Letter stabb'd my Heart! What said I within

my ſelf! *Alcander* is inconſtant, ingrateful, and unfaithful, and I have done all for him: thou lov'ſt me ſtill, unhappy *Cleanthus*, thou art faithful to me, and thou wilt marry me; yet I abandon thee, I ſhamefully betray thee; thy Unkle comes to take my Mother from Priſon, thy Unkle wou'd have us marry: Tell me (continu'd I) can theſe Sentiments hold againſt what he has ſeen? and thou, canſt thou reſiſt againſt what he ſhall tell thee? canſt thou yet love me? or rather, canſt thou hinder thy ſelf from looking on me as the vileſt Wretch, and hating me mortally? 'Tis I at preſent (purſu'd I) unfortunate Mother, that keeps thee Priſoner, and am the Cauſe that thy Misfortunes ſhall never end. Juſt Heaven! cry'd I ſighing, I wou'd not wait for Succour from that favourable hand which was ready to help me; I wou'd not truſt to it; and now I am miſerable for the reſt of my Life.

I thought and ſaid many things which it wou'd be difficult to recite to you. In concluſion, the violent Agitation of my mind, and the profound Sadneſs which I felt, made ſo wonderful a Revolution upon my Senſes, that I fell dangerouſly ſick. My Mother cou'd not overcome this laſt Misfortune; ſhe had retir'd into a Monaſtery, where ſhe dy'd oppreſt with Sorrows

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Courage, Courage, (ſaid I) Fortune redouble thy Blows. I form'd to my ſelf a kind of Pleaſure, to ſee my ſelf at the higheſt point of Adverſity, believing they muſt now end with my Death: but my hour was not yet come; I was recall'd to Life for other Miſeries.

Alcander put on Mourning a little after my Mother's Death; I imagin'd it was for his Mother-in-law, that is to ſay, that he look'd upon me as his Wife: I had not yet ſuffer'd enough for my Sins: now I was quite out of Danger; I know not if the ſecret Joy I had to ſee my ſelf *Alcander*'s Wife, did not very much contribute to it. However, the Impreſſions of the Diſtemper were too ſtrong to be ſo ſoon cur'd: I did not ſleep at all, and was extraordinary reſtleſs; three or four times a day an Apothecary's Boy brought me Syrups ready prepar'd, and Juleps. One day when the Curtains of my Bed were drawn cloſe, and that I believ'd my ſelf alone in my Chamber, my Mind being fill'd with nothing but *Cleanthus*, theſe Words chanced to eſcape me; Ah, unhappy *Cleanthus!* Juſt in that inſtant I ſaw the Curtains open, and the Apothecary's Boy that brought my Syrups throw himſelf upon his Knees by my Bed-ſide, ſaying to me with Eyes bath'd in Tears, and a Heart

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full of bitter Sighs; Yes, lovely *Lesbia*, yes, he is more unhappy than you can conceive. I cast my eyes upon the Boy; but a Periwig which he wore, the Dress he was in, the Leanness and Decay which appear'd in his Face, embarrass'd me for some time; at last I knew him to be *Cleanthus*: we were both so discompos'd, that we remain'd a long time unable to speak to one another, but by Looks and Sighs. He told me, That his Unkle being return'd to *Rouen*, had spoke to him very disadvantageously of me; that he had said I was a Maid without Honour or Virtue, and had commanded him never to see me more, or think of me: he added, That knowing me, and the covetous, interested Temper of his Unkle, far from being capable of thinking such a thing, he had believ'd that his Unkle's Counsel at *Paris*, having judg'd our Cause not to be good, and that we could not regain it, he had contriv'd this Artifice to give him a Disgust of me, and to hinder him from marrying me, having had no other Prospect in our Marriage, but the Gain of our Process, and to be reveng'd of his Adversary. *Cleanthus* told me likewise, that in that Opinion he had made some displeasing Reproaches to his Unkle, for breaking his Word with us; and had said, that he was a Man of Honour, that

he wou'd keep his Faith inviolably, and have no Wife but me: that this Answer had irritated his Unkle so much, that he refus'd to see him, and that he had marry'd a young Woman, on whom he had settled all his Estate: that tho' he had reason to be sensibly touch'd with such a Loss, his Concern for not hearing from me had made him forget that Misfortune, and determin'd him to come to *Paris*, to enquire after me: that there he had heard of my Indisposition, with a great deal of Grief; and that not knowing how to see me otherwise, he had plac'd himself with the Apothecary who serv'd me, under pretence of learning the Trade; that he found himself well recompenc'd of this innocent Artifice, since he had been so happy as to render me some little Service in the time of my Sickness; that he might now protest to me his Passion (far from being lessen'd by Time or the injust Reports that had been made to him of me) was grown so violent, and rais'd to such an Excess, that he cou'd live no longer without seeing me; in fine, that he came to learn his Destiny from my Mouth, and that his Life was in my hands.

Who wou'd not have been mov'd, dear *Frandeliſa*, with a Proceeding so tender, and so faithful? Indeed I was most sensibly; but that did not hinder me from represent-

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ing to him, that tho' I shou'd think it my greatest Happiness to see my self his, yet we ought not to think of it; that we had neither of us any Fortune; and that it was indispensibly necessary in Marriage, if one wou'd not make themselves miserable: I confest to him, that I had believ'd him unfaithful, not hearing of him after the Loss of our Process; that I had been extreamly afflicted at it; and that a little time after, my Mother had promis'd me to *Alcander*; that because of his imagin'd Infidelity, I had consented to it; that *Alcander* waited only for the Death of his Mother (who was very infirm) to marry me; and that he had expreſt his Sentiments, by having put on Mourning for my Mother: He reply'd to me, with Tears in his Eyes, that the Passion he had for me was so disinterested, and so wholly fix'd to my Interests, that he wou'd willingly become a Galley-slave to make me a Queen, for no other Reward, than that I shou'd be pleas'd with him in my Heart for it: but that I ought to be perswaded, that *Alcander* wou'd not marry me; that his Sentiments were too far opposite to Marriage; that he only desir'd to deceive me; and that the Mourning he wore was for his own Mother, deceased a few days after mine.

As he spoke thus to me, we heard my

Nurſe upon the ſtairs, who was comming to me, and talking with the Doctor; which made *Cleanthus* riſe and leave me haſtily, for fear of diſcovering ſomething, by the Trouble and Confuſion we were in. The Conſolation I felt by ſeeing him, and finding him tender, and faithful, work'd ſuch a ſudden Effect upon my Senſes, and Spirits that in a little time I ſaw my ſelf recover'd; they flattered me that I grew handſomer after my Sickneſs; and I believ'd it a little, when I ſaw *Alcander*'s Paſſion for me much augmented: never ſo much Aſſiduity, ſuch Complaiſance! his only Care was to bring me the fineſt Ornaments, and Jewels and to give me all ſorts of Diverſions; he wou'd have me keep his Purſe; he had giv'n me two thouſand *Lowis d' Ors* to keep; I was Miſtreſs of all, he never call'd me otherwiſe than his dear Wife. To conclude, I liv'd with him as with a Husband, flatter'd with hopes, that as ſoon as the Year of Mourning for his Mother was out, he wou'd marry me publickly, and own me to be his Wife: but you cannot conceive what I ſuffer'd in the time of that Expectation. Ah! how different from others are thoſe Pleaſures which are not lawful! and how wretched is a Maid when ſhe is fall'n into that ſhameful Extremity! She dares not appear in

the World; she thinks they speak of nothing but of her, and of her Infamy; every thing makes her fear, nothing gives her Consolation; her Life passes in Disquiets and continual Remorses; her Lover only loves in her his own Salacity and Pleasure, without considering whether he pleases or displeases; she soon perceives it: tho' she hates Tobacco, tho' she dreads the Smell of Wine, tho' his wild and debauch'd Behaviour, or his ill Humour, fatigues and torments her, he daigns not to take notice of it; she must suffer, she must dissemble, and to preserve him, must feign Ecstasies and Ravishments of Love and Pleasure. A Wife makes a Vertue of these sort of things for her Husband: the honorable Figure she makes in the World, her orderly Family, her fine Children, that indispensable necessity of Living and Dying with her Husband, their common Interests, the Satisfaction of doing her Duty, the Repose of Conscience; all joyn'd together, take off those sort of Distasts, and furnishes a marry'd Woman with new Pleasures, which are unknown to one who does not live within the Rules. For these Reasons, I resolv'd to make *Alcander* declare himself as soon as the Year of Mourning was over; and in case he wou'd not marry me, to abandon him, as a perfidious Traytor.

Cleanthus had left the Apothecary's House; and after having often sought, in vain, Occasion to speak to me in private, he at last found one: 'twas to tell me, that *Alcander*, in the Mind and Humour he was of, wou'd never marry me; that he came to offer me his Assistance to be reveng'd of him; that tho' the greatest Misfortune which cou'd befall him in the World, was to see me in another's Arms, the Pleasure of my Fortune, of my Elevation, and the Acknowledgment I wou'd have for him in the depth of my heart, wou'd much asswage his Grief. What Sighs, what Tears, did this Conversation cost us! in fine, it ended by a Promise which I made him, that in case *Alcander* (after the Year of Mourning for his Mother) wou'd not marry me, I wou'd be guided by his Advice. No, I cannot express to you the diversity of Movements which appear'd in him that moment. It grows late, let us advance, my Dear.

The Year of Mourning for *Alcander*'s Mother being ended, he wou'd not marry me; and these were his fine Reasons: That we were already marry'd, and might continue and live in the same manner with Safety of Conscience, since Consent alone made a Marriage, which we had given one another; that a publick Marriage, and in all the forms, is not so agreeable, nor so

voluptuous; that 'tis oppoſite, and contrary to Love; that the Heart does not agree with it; it loves Liberty, and cannot act by Duty; and that as he deſign'd to love me all his Life with the ſame Fervour and Tenderneſs, he wou'd not marry me otherwiſe. I anſwer'd on my ſide, that 'twas to deceive our ſelves, to think our Marriage good, when our Religion and our Laws condemn'd it; that a Marriage after the Forms, was not attended with Contempt and Infamy; that it was without Fears, and without Remorſe; that one was not ſhamefully oblig'd to hide the Fruits of it, but might behold them with Joy; that the Children, in whom their Parents have the Pleaſure of finding one another, were Bonds which united them more ſtrictly in Inclination and Intereſts; that theſe Ties were much ſtronger than thoſe of a flitting Paſſion; that a generous and well-diſpos'd Heart found its Pleaſure in its Duty, and form'd it ſelf to a ſoft habitude of following it: in fine I concluded that I ſaw very well he did not love me, ſince he cou'd ſee my Diſquiet and my Shame, without being touch'd with it, and refus'd to ſubmit to a Law which oblig'd him to love me all his Life.

This Refuſal afflicted me the more ſenſibly, when I found he had deceiv'd me by

his Promiſe writ and ſign'd with his Blood, which he cou'd releaſe himſelf from, becauſe of his Minority. 'Twas then that I reflected very ſeriouſly upon the little Profit I had made of the Inſtructions my *Religieuſe* had given me: what Sorrow and Repentance had I for it! I had not forgot to have heard her ſay, That when a Maid unhappily had fall'n into that Precipice, ſhe ſhou'd not loſe the time of withdrawing her ſelf from it, unleſs ſhe wou'd abandon her ſelf to the laſt Diſgrace and Infamy. That Thought made me take the Reſolution of leaving *Alcander*, and marrying *Cleanthus*: But oh, what ſharp Reproaches did I not make my ſelf! what did I not ſuffer when I came to think, that I had now no more to bring into the Arms of a ſincere and faithful Lover, than the ſhameful Leavings of a perfidious Traytor, and how little I deſerv'd *Cleanthus*'s Eſteem! No, 'tis impoſſible to expreſs to you all that paſs'd in my ſad Heart. In fine, I adverti'd *Cleanthus*, that I wou'd ſpeak with him; he came to the Rendezvouz, and there I inform'd him that *Alcander* wou'd not marry me. Our laſt Reſolution was, that I ſhould take my time to leave *Alcander*'s Lodgings, and to carry with me the two thouſand *Lowis d' Ores* which he had given me to keep, with all I had of

lowing the Advice which had been given me by a Lawyer, I shou'd retire into a Convent; that I should sue *Alcander* for the Performance of his Promise; and that after the Decree, which cou'd go no farther than to Interest and Damages, because of his Minority, *Cleanthus* should marry me. As a Pledge of my Faith, I took a Ring of Value which *Alcander* had given me, from my Finger, and gave it to *Cleanthus*; but both of us considering, that *Alcander* missing the Ring, might have some Suspicions of my Conduct, I took the Ruby out to give *Cleanthus*, and kept the Ring upon my Finger to shew *Alcander*, and to make him believe the Ruby was lost. That which made me most uneasie, was the Infidelity I was guilty of to *Alcander*, in violating the Trust he had repos'd in me of the *Louis d'ores*; but *Cleanthus* convinc'd me by so many good Reasons, that we are not oblig'd to keep our Faith with Villains and Traytors, that I yielded to his Perswasions.

Afterwards *Lesbia* recounted to *Frandelisa* and the Widow, that when she expected *Alcander* to go to a Hunting, by which he wou'd give her a favourable Opportunity of leaving him, and executing the Design she had form'd, he unhappily return'd; that the same day the ill Weather had oblig'd him to go into a Room of an Inn in

bel, about the quality and price of the Ruby, which she had given him, and which *Alcander* had presented her with: that *Alcander* having advanc'd softly behind *Cleanthus*, whilst he had the Ruby in his hand, he had seen it, and thought it much resembled that which he had given her, and that *Cleanthus* perceiving it, in spight of the Rain had gone immediately out of the House; that this Proceeding had given *Alcander* violent Suspicions against her; that to clear them, he had made a Footman of *Cleanthus* who stayed behind in the Tavern, be cunningly examin'd; that this Footman had answer'd, that a Lady whose name he did not know, had presented his Master with the Ruby, and that she was to give him two thousand *Lowis d'Ores*, and to marry him. In fine, she added, that *Alcander* had believ'd it to be her, of whom the Fellow spoke; and therefore she cou'd not doubt but that he was in a furious Rage against her: that she did not know how to retrieve his good Opinion, and make him believe it was some other Person of whom the Footman had told that Story; and concluding, she said to *Fraudelisa*, and the Widow, that she shou'd have the last Obligations to them, if they cou'd give her any Counsel, and Means to recover this unlucky Step.

Lesbia having ended her Discourse, the Widow told her, she had reason indeed to say, that her Affair was more troublesome and embarrassing than *Fraudelisa*'s; and then after having Study'd a little, she ask'd her whether *Alcander* knew her Story with *Cleanthus*, or at least to her Knowledge: to which *Lesbia* answer'd, that she had govern'd her self so well in that, that not only he had not known any thing of it, but that he believ'd she had no Acquaintance with any Man but himself. Can't you (continu'd the Widow) get the Ruby again which you gave *Cleanthus*? Yes indeed. How, (interrupted *Fraudelisa*) how, wou'd you have her to ask him to give her her Ruby again? We must buy another just like it then reply'd the Woman, and *Alvarez* has them of so many Fashions, that in his shop we shall easily find what we seek. Well (return'd *Fraudelisa*) when *Lesbia* has such a Ruby, what shall she do with it; what will be the Consequence? She shall make it be found in the House, (answer'd the Widow) by one of *Alcander*'s Servants who will carry it to him: *Alcander* (continu'd she) not knowing of your Acquaintance with *Cleanthus*, and not imagining that you can have heard of what has past, that he saw *Cleanthus* have a Ruby, and

ſuſpected it to be that which he had given you, will without doubt believe that he was miſtaken, that it was not that which he gave you, but ſome other, and that the Account the Footman, gave, was of ſome other Perſon than you; and between our ſelves (concluded ſhe ſmiling) if you play your part well, *Alcander* loving you, you may perſwade him what you pleaſe; for 'tis eaſy for a fair Lady to make a Man who loves her, believe that ſhe is faithful to him.

As the Widow ſpoke thus, *Lesbia* thought upon a place that wou'd be convenient to make the Ruby be found in; ſo returning a thouſand Thanks to her, and to *Fraudeliſa*, ſhe told them, that ſhe hop'd to make ſucceſsful Uſe of their Advice: and it growing late, they went preſently all three together out of *Fraudeliſa*'s Houſe, and firſt to the Copyiſt, to make him imitate exactly *Fraudeliſa*'s Letter to *Philabel*; and whilſt he was buſie at that, they went to look for a Ruby like that which *Alcander* had given *Lesbia*. They found one Perfectly reſembling it. *Lesbia* bought it: then they came back to the Copyiſt, who had imitated *Fraudeliſa*'s Letter ſo well, that her ſelf was deceiv'd in it; and after having embrac'd, and kiſs'd one another, they parted, *Lesbia* and

Fraudeliſa, going to diſpoſe all things for the next Day's Expedition.

Fraudeliſa folded up, and ſeal'd the Letter, in the ſame manner as the true one was, then broke the ſeal, put it in a little Apron pocket which ſhe had, and went to Bed, meditating all night how ſhe ſhou'd bring about her Deſigns.

Lesbia on her ſide, retir'd too, but took, at an Apothecary's by the way, a doſe of ſtrong Phyſick; and being come home to her Lodging, having a Key to *Alcanders* Cloſet, which ſhe had made without his Knowledge, ſhe put the Ruby which ſhe had bought, in that place where he kept his Letters, hiding it under ſome of them; becauſe that a few days before ſhe had given the Ruby to *Cleanthus*, ſhe had offer'd, whilſt *Alcander* was by, to take from thence a Letter ſeal'd with ſilk, which ſhe had a mind to ſee, but he had hindred her, and ſqueezing her fingers had forc'd her to lay it down in that place, *Lesbia* intending to make him think, that the Ruby had drop'd at that time, and ſo continu'd there; then ſhe lock'd the Cloſet, and went to bed, her mind being ſolely employ'd on what ſhe was to execute the day following.

The next day *Philocrates* riſe earlier than uſual, impatient to expreſs himſelf

with *Fraudeliſa*; he found her at her Toylet, in a part of the Room that was a lettle obſcure; and ſeated himſelf by her with a chagrin, and penſive air; ſhe feign'd to be ſurpriz'd with it, and ask'd him the Cauſe. You ſhall ſee it, *ingrate*, ſaid he, in this Letter, giving her that which ſhe had writ to *Philabel*: ſhe took it, and then aproaching the Window, and turning aſide, ſhe ſlipt it into her Apron-pocket, and took from thence the Copy which ſhe had caus'd to be writ the night before; but ſo dexterouſly, that *Philocrates* had not the leaſt ſuſpicion of it: then ſhe examin'd the Letter in his Preſence with a ſeeming Attention, and looking often upon it, expreſs'd a great deal of Surpriſe, and Aſtoniſhment. See, faithleſs Creature, (continu'd *Philocrates*) in what Stile you writ to *Philabel*, that Man whom you called ſo impudent, ſo inſolent, whom you hated ſo much, and whom you told me you had forbid to ſee you: he is worthy of you (purſu'd he) and I will never be an Obſtacle to your Paſſion. Thats to ſay (interrupted *Fraudeliſa* ſharply) that you believe this Letter to be my hand, and that I writ it to *Philabel*: you know but ill (continu'd ſhe with a cold, diſdainful Air) my Hand or my Heart; you that offer to tax me with Ingratitude, and Infi-

delity

delity. After this she writ the same Letter over before *Philocrates*, and having finish'd the Copy, she threw it to him with that which she had suppos'd, saying, Now see how you deceive your self, but don't think (pursu'd she haughtily) that I do this for any Pretension that I have to your Heart; no, I renounce it all my Life, and what I have done now, is but for my own Satisfaction and Honour. Thus she left him, and went into her Mothers Chamber, without deigning to hear him speak. *Philocrates* took the two Copies of the Letter, examin'd, and confronted them; one while he believes them both to be *Frandelisa*'s Hand, then again he thinks 'em different; what shou'd he do? to whom address himself? to the Writing-Masters; in their, Opinion the Letters are of different Hands, and *Frandelisa*'s innocent: the Abbot *Sophin* is not absolutely of the same Mind; they dispute together, they consult, they wander in their reasonings, and know not what to determine certainly upon it.

As for *Lesbia*, as soon as Day appear'd, she secretly took the Physick which she had prepar'd and waited it's Effects; when it begun to operate violently, she sent a Footman to tell *Alcander* from her, that she was dying, and desir'd to speak with

him

him. I dye with Willingneſs, ſaid ſhe to him, ſeeing him approach her Bed, and I have no Regrets for Life, ſince you are falſe to me, and that I cannot be your Wife. Then ſhe feign'd a Convulſion Fit, the ſtrength of the Phyſick, and the alteration it had made upon her Face, contributed much to hide her Deceit, and to perſwade *Alcander* that ſhe was really dying. After ſome time, pretending to recover from her Fit, ſhe continu'd to ſpeak thus: Hear me, *Alcander*, I have but little time to live, and my minutes are precious: Take, ſaid ſhe ſighing, the Keys of my Trunk, the Money you gave me to keep, which is in it, and all I have of Value in the World; I give you all I have, and I wiſh I had a Scepter, and a Crown, to offer you in dying; after my Death, you'll ſee the Difference betwixt *Lesbia*'s Fidelity, and that of your other Miſtreſſes; and I ſhall then be at the bottom of your Heart, to make you feel the Torments which are due to the perjur'd and unfaithful. *Alcander* was in a Surpriſe and Amazement, which cannot be conceiv'd, and his Reſentment cou'd not hold againſt the Condition in which he ſaw *Lesbia*; nor againſt the Marks ſhe made appear to him of Tenderneſs, and Love. He would know the Cauſe from whence ſuch ſudden and extraordinary Effects cou'd proceed, and inſtantly begg'd of *Lesbia* to tell it him.

She begun (pretending to take new Forces) with telling him, that ſhe had not ſlept all that Night; that when it was almoſt Day ſhe had fall'n into a little Slumber, but had ſcarce taſted the firſt Sweetneſſes of it, when a frightful monſtrous Woman had appear'd to her, the very Remembrance of whom made her tremble ſtill. She deſcrib'd her to him, ſaying, ſhe had hollow Cheeks, a wide Mouth, black and thick Lips, a flat Noſe, large Noſtrils, her Skin yellow, and mark'd with ſpots of Blood, her Eyes half out

of her Head, from which Fire inceſſantly ſparkled, her Head erect, and Serpents twiſted round it, inſtead of Hair. She continu'd ſaying that ſhe ſeem'd to her to diſappear a moment after, ſnatching a Serpent from her Head which ſhe flung at her; that this Serpent ſlipping upon her hand, had faſtned on the ring which *Alcander* gave her, and pull'd out the Ruby with his Teeth; then went and hid it in that place where he laid his Letters, after which ſhe diſappear'd: that at the ſame time abundance of Ravens, Owls, and Bats, aſſembled upon her Head, in the form of a Canopy, and made a fearful noiſe with their Cries; when a tall Woman, handſome, and with an Air extreamly ſweet, carrying an Olive branch in her hand, had chas'd them away; and vaniſhing, had thrown upon her Bed a Leaf of her Branch; that ſhe wak'd immediately ſo perſwaded that ſhe ſhou'd find the Olive-leaf, that ſhe had look'd a long time for it; and in fine, that ſhe had fall'n into ſuch violent Convulſions, that ſhe plainly ſaw, ſhe ought to think of nothing but dying: that theſe Ominous Birds came to advertiſe her of it, and the weakneſs in which ſhe found her ſelf made her ſee ſhe had but few hours to live; after which, ſhe gave as the Laſt Adieu's to *Alcander* intreating him to remember her always, and to keep the Reſolution he had taken of never marrying; then without hearkening to what he wou'd, ſay, ſhe turn'd to t' other ſide; begging him to leave her the little time ſhe had, to think upon her ſelf.

Never Man beheld himſelf ſo much embarraſs'd as *Alcander* was, he knew not what to do, nor what to think: Solitude pleas'd him, he retir'd to his Cloſet, he caſt his eyes upon his Letters, and ſeeing ſome of them remov'd in that place where *Lesbia* dream'd the Serpent hid the Ruby, he had the Curioſity (as he was laying them in their Order) to

ſearch the place: Ha! how was he ſurpriz'd when he found a Ruby there! he knew not who, or where he was, and fancy'd all he had ſeen was an Illuſion. In this Condition he run to the Abbot *Sophin's*, where he found *Philocrates*, who told him, that the letter was not from *Fraudeliſa*, that ſhe was innocent that he had been convinc'd of it; and in general, all that he knew, upon that Subject.

Alcander on his ſide, recounted to them both, all that had paſs'd in his Adventure; and after many Reflections, the Opinions of *Philocrates* and *Alcander* were, that *Lesbia* was innocent, as well as *Fraudeliſa*; but the Abbot ſuſpected ſome Artifice in it. That which amaz'd *Alcander* and *Philocrates* to the laſt degree, was *Lesbia's* Dream; nothing was ſo diverting, as the Explications they gave it, and the Stories, and Reflections they made upon the Significancy of Dreams: That great hideous Woman who flung the Serpents was *Diſcord*; the other, ſoft and beautiful, was the *Goddeſs of Peace*, who with her Olive-branch, had chas'd the Ominous Birds away. They maintain'd to the Abbot *Sophin*, that there are Genius's and Spirits which advertiſe us in Dreams, of what is to befall us; and inſtanc'd in *Calphurnia's* which had foreſhown the Death of her Husband *Julius Cæſar*; that of *Crœſus*, which told him his Son *Atys* ſhou'd be kill'd with a Dart, that of *Aſtyages* King of *Media*, which advertis'd him that the Son which ſhou'd be born of his Daughter *Mandana*, was to be Maſter of *Aſia*. In fine, they told many more, and their Converſation ended with a Reflection they made, that one ought never to judge of any thing, ſince ſuch ſtrong and violent Preſumptions as theſe were deceitful.

After all this Diſcourſe, they told the Abbot *Sophin*, that they wou'd not leave him till he had decided their Queſtion, whether it was moſt ad-

vantageous to marry, or to live without a Wife. You determin'd (answer'd *Philocrates*) upon a false Letter: you judg'd (interrupted *Alcander*) upon grounds which are not true, your Decision then may be Erroneous: so that (added they both) we have a Right to appeal from your first Sentence. That which I have to give each of you (answer'd the Abbot) I had from one of the greatest Men in the Universe; I don't advise you to Marriage (said he addressing himself to *Alcander*) if you find in your self a Vertue firm and constant enough to sanctifie you in a perfect Continence: I don't forbid it you (continu'd he, turning to *Philocrates*) if you find it necessary for the Good, and Repose of your Conscience; but know both of you, that for what concerns the Choice of that State of Life, as of all others, we ought to look upon no other Consideration, and direct our Conduct but by that alone.

As *Philocrates* and *Alcander* were going to answer, several Abbots of the first Quality came to visit the Abbot *Sophin*, which oblig'd them to withdraw; the Abbot waiting on them to the door, rally'd them about their Mistresses, and taking leave, bid them with a pleasant Tone, go quickly and reconcile themselves with them; and addressing to *Philocrates*, he told him laughing, that he ought to rely upon what had first been told him and believe the Letter false; and for *Alcander*, that he shou'd go look for the Olive leaf, and no doubt he would find it. This Raillery of the Abbots, tho innocent did nevertheless affect *Philocrates* and *Alcander*, who went from his Lodgings very melancholy, and much disquieted with what had happen'd to them.

FINIS.